

CHRISTIAN COURIER

June 11, 2001

A Reformed Biweekly

No.2666 \$1.60



Mission train and the drag of a caboose pp. 12, 13

Hamilton school raises \$47,000 in 30 Hour Famine p. 15



56th year of publication

Short-term relief projects not just for youth

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JUN 14 2001

CHRISTIAN COURIER
PER/BX/9401/C36

COURTESY CHRISTIAN REFORMED WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE

Rian Eygenraam, from Inglewood CRC in Edmonton, helping build a home in Honduras as part of the CRWRC Housing Project there.

Alan Doerksen

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. — For Christians who want to help out less privileged people in practical ways, relief agencies such as World Vision, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) are offering hands-on opportunities for volunteers to help out for several weeks at a time. Although many young people tend to sign up for these opportunities, seniors and people in mid-career are also showing interest, report the agencies.

Destination Life Change is a new volunteer relief program offered by World Vision Canada (WVC). Michele Norrie, the

program manager, reports that it was started last July and sent its first group of volunteers to Romania from April 29 to May 26. Destination Life Change "involves people of all ages. Some people are older, retired, or need a break from their career," explains Norrie. Currently, "most of the programs are three or four weeks, but we're looking at one or two weeks," so that working people can more easily take time off to work on a project.

Destination Life Change is especially meant for volunteers who "want to do more," explains a WVC press release. "They want to actually feed the hungry, care for the sick, shelter the homeless."

Volunteers first travel to WVC's headquarters in Mississauga, Ont., where they get orientation training. Then they go to another country to become involved with a World Vision project.

Contributing to change

Participants are able to see the agency's development work first-hand, contribute directly to changing the lives of people in need, learn about another culture and about themselves.

"Each program is carefully planned to match the participant's interests and abilities to a genuine need in a community," explains WVC. For instance, says Norrie, some are specialized, like the medical and dental teams.

This year, Destination Life Change is running projects in Costa Rica, Honduras and Romania. In Romania, WVC is looking for orphanage caregivers to brighten the lives of children up to age three at an orphanage near Bucharest. As WVC explains on its website, "Because of tremendous poverty in Romania, many parents choose to leave their children in orphanages, believing they will have a better life. These children are in desperate need of extra love and attention while World Vision tries to reunite them with their families. This work involves bathing and dressing the children, feeding them, playing with them and taking them on outings." The main qualification for volunteers to Romania is "the people really need to love kids, because an orphanage can be really depressing," explains Norrie. A series of five four-week programs are being offered this year in Romania.

In Costa Rica, WVC is offering two projects in which volunteers can become involved: a solar oven project, and teaching English. The first project involves participants helping families to build solar ovens, which conserve natural resources and provide the means to cook nutritious meals. For this

three-week project, happening twice over the summer months, "a willingness to lend a helping hand and to build friendships is the only qualification required," states WVC.

The teaching English program will take place this fall, for four week stints.

In Honduras, groups of nurses, pediatricians, family doctors and dentists are needed to travel to

remote areas to complete annual physicals for WV-sponsored children.

All Destination Life Change volunteers need to raise funds to pay their expenses and find sponsors for three children in the area they will be visiting.

"We're looking at expanding quite a bit next year," says Norrie.

CRWRC offers most of its
See RELIEF page 2...

Supreme Court rules in favor of Trinity Western

Harry der Nederlanden

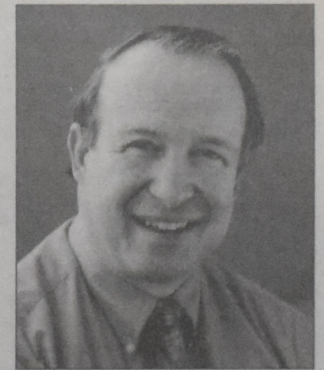
LANGLEY, B.C. — In an 8-1 decision, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Trinity Western University's policy which requires students to refrain from gay sex (among other things, such as propanity and drunkenness) does not disqualify it from accrediting teachers.

The ruling struck down a decision by the B.C. College of Teachers which refused accreditation to the final year of the TWU teacher training program because, it said, the policy would produce teachers who are homophobic. In effect, the College of Teachers was claiming that grads of TWU have a deficient ethical standard that renders them unfit to serve in the public schools. The case, therefore, had far-reaching implications: Would all Christians (as well as people of other faiths) who believe homosexual activity is wrong be declared unfit to work in similar jobs?

Tolerance a hallmark

The court concluded that "tolerance of divergent beliefs is a hallmark of a democratic society" and that the College of Teachers didn't provide a shred of evidence that TWU grads would promote discrimination.

The court also said that the



COURTESY TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY

Guy Saffold, TWU's executive vice-president.

College of Teachers had failed to balance the rights of homosexual students with those of the Christian teachers; freedom of religion "is not accommodated if the consequence of its exercise is the denial of the full participation of society."

Distinguishing between belief and action, it noted that there is no evidence that hundreds of TWU-trained teachers who, until now, have been required to complete their education at a publicly funded university, have discriminated against homosexual students. The College, it said, can take action only when teachers

See TWU VICTORY page 2...

News

Relief projects help volunteers 'put feet to their faith'

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short-term volunteer opportunities through ServiceLink, an inter-agency program of the CRC in Canada (started in 1995) which helps volunteers to meet needs in Christ's name throughout Canada and the world by linking them with service opportunities with CRC agencies and partners in ministry. ServiceLink works to link volunteers with projects related to their gifts and talents, and sometimes designs special projects for individual volunteers or groups, says co-ordinator Carol Sybenga. For volunteers, "95 per cent of the time they have to raise their own funds" for projects, says Sybenga. This covers expenses such as transportation, accommodations, and use of a translator in some countries.

When volunteers are sponsored by their churches, "it becomes a church event," says Sybenga. Both a volunteer and his or her home church can share in the joy of helping out people in need. Especially for young people, such projects can often be life-changing experiences, she asserts.

Retirees and youth groups

Projects can last from one to several weeks. Retired people tend to go on longer projects, but working people prefer two weeks stints, and some young people prefer one-week projects to take place during their spring break, suggests Sybenga. "We have a lot of youth groups" and young adults come forward as volunteers, says Sybenga. Usually, youth groups



PHOTO COURTESY OF WORLD VISION CANADA

A Romanian orphan receives love and care from A Destination Life Change participant.

work on projects in Canada or the U.S. "There are a lot of intergenerational opportunities in the States," she adds.

Currently, ServiceLink has a need for volunteers to go to El Salvador to help with a housing rehabilitation program that has just been established. Volunteers will stay with local people, so that they can "go there and build, and build relationships, too," explains Sybenga.

ServiceLink also has a clean water project going on in Honduras, providing running water for communities that need it.

To help its work in Sudan, ServiceLink is seeking a teacher "to encourage the teachers in southern Sudan," says Sybenga. Such a person would work from

six to eight months, examining curriculum, providing professional development to teachers, and encouraging children to come to school.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) offers a wide variety of short-term programs to volunteers interested in hands-on relief work. Unlike WVC, most of MCC's short-term programs are in North America. MCC has six programs which last from two days to two weeks, and another six programs from one to six months long.

Sharing With Appalachian People (SWAP) is one short-term MCC program. Using the efforts of volunteers, SWAP addresses sub-standard housing in eastern Kentucky. "In the name of Christ" participants will work with and for local clients, sharing the message of God's love and building relationships that serve to enrich all involved.

SWAP is open to individuals 15 years or older and groups of two to 82 people, and invites applicants to "put feet to your faith" by ministering to the communities of Appalachia for a week, month, year or more.

TOOLS (Toronto, Ontario Opportunities for Learning and Service) is an urban immersion experience run by MCC.



MCC PHOTO

Participants in Mennonite Central Committee's TOOLS program pack food hampers.

Participants are given an opportunity to learn about poverty and to meet people living on the edges of society, for a weekend or up to two weeks.

Youth groups, fellowship groups, house churches, retired people, inter-generational groups, college and university groups and families are invited to participate. TOOLS is open to all who seek a deeper understanding of Christian service in the city.

While in Toronto, groups will be involved in working in soup kitchens, night shelters, food banks, and possibly light construction and painting.

MCC volunteers usually raise their own funds, explains Arli Klassen, executive director of MCC Ontario. Some Mennonite and Brethren in Christ groups may be eligible for a subsidy.

One unusual project MCC runs

each year involves a mobile meat canner. "The mobile canner comes to Ontario each year," says Klassen. Each April, in Guelph and Leamington, Ont., as many as 800 volunteers will work cutting up and preparing beef, for a week in each city. In Leamington, the meat is purchased with donated money, and in Guelph, animals are donated directly. Once the meat is canned, it is sent to countries with protein shortages, explains Klassen. "Last year it went to North Korea and Ukraine."

MCC's short-term projects are open to a variety of age groups, says Klassen. Programs such as TOOLS "tend to focus on youth groups," she notes.

"Our motto in all our work is 'Service in the name of Christ,'" explains Klassen. For volunteers, projects can be "a wonderful, delightful adventure."

TWU court victory upholds freedom of religion

... continued from page 1

actually show evidence of discriminatory behavior.

The decision upholds earlier rulings in the B.C. Supreme Court and the B.C. Court of Appeal.

"It upholds freedom of conscience and freedom of religion for Canadians of all kinds," said Guy Saffold, the university's executive vice-president. "If a government agency, without any evidence of wrongdoing or misbehavior, can start burdening people's convictions, who will be targeted tomorrow?"

He added: "The Supreme Court of Canada has affirmed that, in our multicultural and multi-faith society, people cannot be arbitrarily penalized or barred from participating in public life simply because they hold religious views." He pointed out that the Supreme Court wrote that: "There is nothing in TWU's Community Standards

that indicates that graduates of TWU will not treat homosexuals fairly and respectfully."

Canada's Catholic bishops said the ruling "reinforces the understanding that genuine pluralism makes room for a variety of beliefs from a variety of sources, and that in a truly free society there is freedom of, but not freedom from, religion."

Sexual equality, freedom of belief can co-exist

The B.C. Civil Liberties Association, which, with the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, intervened on behalf of TWU, said the case shows how two important civil-libertarian principles — sexual equality and freedom of belief — can co-exist. "The nature of social life is that freedoms collide," said executive director Murray Mollard. "This is a great case for trying to reconcile constitutionally

protected rights."

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada expressed its appreciation for the decision. "The Supreme Court has upheld a broad view of religious freedom," said Gary Walsh, President of EFC. "This will put to rest the fears of other religiously-based colleges and seminaries that are worried that their students will face discrimination upon graduation."

"This is the most important decision on religious freedom in years," affirmed Janet Epp Buckingham, EFC's general legal counsel. "We appreciate that the Supreme Court has indicated that no right is privileged over any other and that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms must be read as a whole."

The BCCT gave as its reason for refusing the application: "The proposed program follows discriminatory practices which are

contrary to the public interest and public policy which the College must consider under its mandate as expressed in the Teaching Profession Act."

One of the Supreme Court justices, Claire L'Heureux-Dube, sided with the College of Teachers. She said the college, in its role of "gatekeeper to the profession of public teaching," was right to deny accreditation to Trinity Western: "Evidence shows there is an acute need for improvement in the experiences of homosexual and bisexual students in Canadian classrooms."

"Without the existence of supportive classroom environments, homosexual and bisexual students will be forced to remain invisible and reluctant to approach their teachers," she said.

In a news conference in the Ottawa Citizen, John Fisher, executive director of EGale, a

homosexual rights organization, said he does not view the ruling as a step backwards for gay rights. "In all the previous cases where the court has dealt with sexual orientation issues, there has really been no competing interest to weigh the balance."

"We're not surprised to see the court strive for that balance but I think it leaves a lot of questions still unanswered as to where that line gets drawn. I think we will see cases in future where it becomes an issue for a court to determine at what point did the teacher's conduct cross the line from simply holding anti-gay or anti-semitic or racist beliefs into doing something that suggests public endorsement of these beliefs."

Trinity Western has been offering a four-year teacher training program since 1985. It will begin offering the fifth year in 2002.

(See related story on page 6)

News Analysis/Politics

Is Europe abandoning its commitment to human rights?

Harry der Nederlanden

The fact that the U.S. was denied a seat on the UN Human Rights Commission last May with the collaboration of European countries shocked Americans deeply. It also does not augur well for the cause of human rights around the world, according to Nina Shea, director of the Center for Religious Freedom at Freedom House in Washington, D.C.

Later a subcommittee of the UN took action against several human rights organizations like Freedom House, the Family Research Council, the Baptist World Alliance and the Simon Weisenthal Center in an

effort to ban them from participation in the UN.

According to analysts quoted by Newsroom, the move was prompted by the frustration of European countries with the U.S. go-it-alone foreign policy as well as by a desire, especially by offenders, of course, to stop the finger-pointing and naming of names that has been practiced by the U.S. and by human rights advocates. Others saw it as payback to the Bush administration for not signing the Kyoto treaty on global warming, and pushing its national missile defence program.

Cuba and China celebrated the

defeat, accusing the U.S. of using human rights as a coercive political weapon. Iran radio gloated that the vote is an indicator that U.S. influence is on the wane in international affairs.

Europeans resort to euphemisms

Nina Shea of Freedom House, dismisses such reasons as secondary. The reason the U.S. was ousted from the commission, she contends, is that the Europeans are abandoning their historical commitment to human rights.

"Whereas in the past, the Western European delegations were in

the forefront of the commission's work, highlighting injustices in South Africa, East Timor and Bosnia, they now resort to euphemisms and half-truths. The United States stands virtually alone in striving to focus world attention on actual violations of human rights.

"Repeatedly at the commission, the United States has had to break with the European Union in order to vote its conscience on issues like slavery in Sudan, religious persecution in China and political repression in Cuba. The United States often stands alone, too, in opposing blatantly political condemnations of Israel. The loss of its seat on the commission is meant to punish the United States for marching out of step."

Dennis Bark of the Hoover Institution, a public policy think tank, said that the Europeans prefer a less confrontational style than the Americans, and he traces the difference in style to different histories. European nations, he mused, were built from the top down, while America was built from the bottom up. This makes for a much more open style.

Nina Shea, writing in the *Weekly Standard*, agrees that the Europeans do prefer to pass resolutions by consensus. However, this means that the abusers participate in drafting the resolutions levelled against themselves. This new culture also frowns on the practice of naming violators. Instead, it speaks in generalities and platitudes, shying away from offending anyone and seeking "co-operation". Shea points out that such cooperation has not achieved any significant compliance from countries like the Sudan or China.

Currying favor with China

She speculates that Europe's eagerness to curry favor with China as an important trading partner may have been the decisive element in the European action. "This session," she pointed out, "the United States was the lone sponsor of the draft resolution against China, having failed to garner the European support it had through most of the 1990s."

"China's open bullying and use of trade levers are well known at the commission. After Denmark introduced the resolution citing Chinese human rights abuses in 1997, China threatened to make the issue 'a rock that smashes on the Danish government's head. Denmark, the bird that pokes out its head, will suffer the most.' That was the last time the United States was able to secure co-sponsorship of the measure.

"Beijing tolerates no criticism of its human rights abuses on U.N. premises. After Freedom House arranged a press conference with Chinese democracy activists during last year's session, China, with the support of Sudan and Cuba, brought proceedings against the organization to bar it from participating at future sessions."

Harder to get accreditation

Meanwhile, with the current composition of the subcommittee that gives permission to non-government agencies to speak to the UN about human rights, it is getting harder for bona fide human rights advocates to win accreditation.

"Freedom House," writes Betsy Pisik in the *Washington Times*, "lately has upset Russia by questioning its military actions in Chechnya, angered the Chinese with criticism of religious intolerance, alienated Cuba by pressing for freedom of speech and enraged Sudan by challenging its bid for membership in the Security Council on human rights grounds."

"All four governments are represented on the subcommittee, and each has challenged Freedom House and other prominent human rights groups in their efforts to either win accreditation or renew existing credentials. They note that Russia will challenge any group criticizing its actions in Chechnya, China will automatically block any group that characterizes Tibet or Taiwan as independent of Beijing and Cuba opposes any group that criticizes the Castro regime."

"Joanna Weschler of Human Rights Watch said that repressive governments were emboldened two years ago, after Sudan successfully won the ouster of Christian Solidarity, the group that buys and then liberates Sudanese slaves."

The U.S. House of Representatives expressed its displeasure by threatening to withhold \$244 million in payments to the UN unless it restores the U.S. seat at the next voting. If this was indeed a European attempt to force the U.S. to do more by consultation and consensus, the action may backfire. If the U.S. abandons the UN forum as impotent, then we have lost one tool by which to press for action against human rights violators.

Supreme court sees religions as potential threat

Last month the Supreme Court handed down its long awaited decision in *British Columbia College of Teachers v. Trinity Western University*. A reading of the text of the decision is instructive, because, despite handing a victory to the university in its effort to maintain biblical standards for its students, faculty and staff, it underscores the extent to which the secular mindset finds it difficult to accommodate the convictions of believing Christians (and Jews and Muslims, for that matter) without undermining its own worldview.

The Court properly noted that rights and freedoms are not absolute; otherwise it would be impossible to reconcile them when they come into conflict. It also correctly noted that, where religious liberty is concerned, the freedom to believe is generally broader than the freedom to act on that belief. An obvious example of this would be a religion prescribing human sacrifice.

Court sees religions as divisive

At the same time the majority decision, not to mention Madame Justice Claire L'Heureux-Dubé's dissent, is pervaded with the implicit assumption that adherents of traditional religions pose at least a potential threat to the common good. Religion is, it seems, 'inherently divisive, and its teachings impose particular standards above and beyond the minimal standards of the secular social contract. This apparently presents a problem that only an avowed secularist, untainted by the putative bias of traditional religion, has the resources to address.

With respect to sexual morality, for example, the predominant liberal ideology sees mutual consent as the only acceptable measure of right and wrong. However, most traditional religions prohibit several sexual practices quite irrespective of the partners' willingness to engage in them. Thus adultery and homosexuality are proscribed as immoral or antinormative. Yet many would argue that individuals have a right to engage in such actions irrespective of the historic disapproval of Christians, Jews and Muslims.

One way to settle such differences would be to recognize that the several faith communities have



Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

their own standards of behavior with which the state should not interfere. The court's decision takes something of this approach, but at the cost of privatizing religious faith. Christians are free to believe what they like concerning nonmarital sexual intercourse, but they are not free to practise such belief, particularly in the public sphere. Thus any Christian teacher having the temerity to suggest in the classroom that marriage is the only normative context for sexual activity is guilty of "discriminating" against those who believe in the right to free sexual expression.

Individual rights trump community standards

In an individualistic society, the right of the individual is deemed to trump the right of a community to maintain its own standards of membership. Thus the very existence of a Christian university is seen as a troublesome exception, at the very least, to the rule of rights. For now, the courts are willing to recognize such an entity as exempt from the predominant individualistic legal régime. Yet if at some point it seems that Christian universities are not fostering sufficient appreciation for "diversity and its values," then the courts may see fit to impose their own brand of uniformity at the expense of genuine diversity.

Nevertheless, we can derive some hope from the fact that here in Canada Christian radio and television stations are now permitted where once they were not, that Ontario has now seen fit to extend some measure of educational justice to Christian parents and that, for the present, Trinity Western can educate teachers for British Columbia's public schools. For all this and more we can thank God.



David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario, and has recently completed a book on political ideologies, tentatively titled, *Discerning the Spirits*. He is currently seeking a publisher.

Editorial

On trains, engineers, gymnasts and synodical reports

Harry der Nederlanden

The middle pages of this issue are devoted to George Vandervelde's examination of the report put before CRC Synod by the Committee to Study Ordination and "Official Acts of Ministry." I had intended to provide here a neat summary of the report to help us better understand his criticisms; however, I gave up on the attempt. Still, I think you will get the gist of it from his article.

If you don't, if you are left confused, don't blame Vandervelde. I've read the report three times and have not come to greater clarity. It leaves me frustrated and dissatisfied. That's why I gave up trying to summarize it.

A man-sized mandate

Not that I blame the committee. They were saddled with a man-sized mandate. I'm reminded of an assignment given to engineering students: they are given a box of odds and ends and told to make something useful with them. The Committee to Study Ordination and "Official Acts of Ministry" was given several different problems confronting the church and asked to fit them neatly together into a larger picture. To use another analogy, they were given a dozen pieces of a 500-piece puzzle and told to fill in the other 488 pieces.

Here are some of the problems they were asked to address:

— Using lay leaders in Classis Red Mesa;

- Fitting youth ministers and other specialized ministries into the church;
- Preserving standards of training for the ministry;
- Defining who may do what in terms of baptism and pronouncing blessing, etc.;
- Prescribing standards of character, knowledge and skill for church staff;
- Deciding when and who to ordain.

Adapting to new times, diverse cultures

The committee's task was to address all of these in an elegant, coherent way on the assumption that they are all part of a bigger project, namely, adapting our traditional offices to new times and diverse cultures.

I agree with Vandervelde that the report does not succeed in its assigned task. As I read the report, again and again I had the feeling that it was not doing what it was claiming to do. The picture that came to my mind was emphatically not Vandervelde's — of a train moving smoothly along a track stretching out ahead of it. I was more reminded of a skilled gymnast doing floor exercises who has to perform leaps, twists and turns in order to land on predetermined spots on the mat. Unable to blend his leaps into a unified performance, he relies on the musical accompaniment to create the illusion of coherence.

The musical accompaniment in this case is a theological correction the report makes of Report 44, "Ecclesiastical Office and Ordination," presented to Synod in 1973. I get the impression that the committee came to an 'Aha!' moment at some stage in their deliberations and that this took over the theological momentum of their thinking. Report 44, they say, played off a clerical, hierarchical view of office against a functional, pragmatic one. The first it ascribed to Roman Catholicism and the second to the Reformation. Then it opted for the latter. Big mistake!

This report, then, attempts to correct that mistake by developing what it calls a relational model which will weave the two threads back together.

It tries to do that primarily by developing a more mystical and transcendent idea of the "official acts of ministry." I'm sympathetic to the effort to retain a greater sense of awe and holiness in worship, a sense that almighty God himself is acting in and through his appointed people. But to locate this in only a few special symbolic acts performed by pastors strikes me as mystification. At the very least, it requires much more theological backing than it is given in the report.

In addition, a large and eloquent part of the report develops the mission of the church in terms of an imitation of Christ's way of sacrifice. Sacrificial service, then, becomes the defining element of church office. Everything the report says on this score strikes me as true. As the report itself points out, however, all this is true of the priesthood of *all* believers. In other words, wherever we serve we are called to imitate Jesus Christ by giving ourselves for others, so this is true not just of leaders but of everybody, and it is true not just of leaders in the church but also of leaders in business, politics, education, science, whatever. Then it can't very well define the unique mission of the institutional church and its offices.

I wonder whether the priestly, sacrificial theme doesn't end up becoming so central mainly to set the stage for the mystical, transcendent official acts of ministry, for these are described above all in priestly terms. But certainly there are other themes and images equally important in describing the nature and mission of the church. Just to name one: the church is called to

be the new creation, the place where a new life and a new obedience is cultivated and disciplined (disciplined). Here, not just participation but also a certain over-againstness comes to the fore, as we are called out of and over against the world. The church is theonomous — ruled by the will of God. And the officers of the church are given authority to prod the sheep in the right direction.

Granted, with a little theological will, this theme could, of course, be absorbed into that of sacrifice. But why? Why must we have one master metaphor controlling all?

The threefold office of Christ

Most of us non-theologians in the church have enough acquaintance with Scripture to be aware that Scripture employs such a rich diversity of images and themes to represent the ministry of Christ, the nature and mission of the church and its ministers, that any model is bound to stress some at the cost of others. We also realize that the three offices of pastor, elder and deacon do not merge perfectly with the threefold office of Christ — prophet, priest and king. And few of us ever thought the functions of these offices were written forever in the heavens.

Yet, the framework of the threefold office of Christ did serve us well for hundreds of years, through many profound social changes, because it helped us to focus on three different dimensions of the church's mission, assigning a different office to supervise each dimension. The minister of the Word focused on the church's calling to proclaim the Word, to provide light and direction to its members as well as to "the world" and to call all to conversion. The elder served to administer and organize the life of the people of God so that the church will be a clear witness to the transforming and sanctifying power of the Gospel. The deacon coordinated the resources of the church to help one another as well as the needy outside the fellowship and so to embody the love of Christ.

Sure, this was an *extra*-biblical development, but it was not *unbiblical*. And it strikes me as more multi-dimensional than the theological model offered in this latest report. Report 44 sought to be a corrective to a view of office that stressed authority and status; it stressed servanthood and function. Now we get a report that strives to be a corrective in yet another direction.

Looking over both reports, I'm reminded of Gordon Spykman's observation that theologians too often think that they can move directly from Scriptural interpretation to application, unaware that both are shaped by philosophical frameworks. This report and the issues it raises would be well served, I believe, if we stepped back a little further and defined a little more fully what is unique about the mission of the institutional church and what additional functions it is being asked to fill in a changing society. It isn't as if no one has been thinking about these themes; yet, our study committees seem determined to make it appear as if their reflections on such issues are drawn directly and immaculately out of Scripture.

Catechizing — teaching its members how to live in accordance with God's Word — is an important function of the church. Questioning and dissolving old certitudes is part of that. So far, however, our reports on office have done more to dissolve and disorient than to provide us with a new vision, a new sense of structure and direction. At some point, our leaders owe us, the church, that.

Christian Courier

Formerly known as Calvinist Contact
Founded in 1945

*An independent biweekly that seeks to:
report on significant events in the Christian community and the world; express opinions infused by Scripture and rooted in a Reformed perspective; provide contact for the Christian community.*

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Publications Mail Registration No. 09375

We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

Opinion

Tarnished blessing: Ontario government addresses equity in education

Harry Kits, Executive Director, Citizens for Public Justice

With its announcement of tax credits for independent school parents, the Ontario government has at long last addressed the need for equity in education. Citizens for Public Justice has advanced this equity issue for over 38 years, calling on the provincial government to publicly recognize and equitably fund independent schools. We have argued that recognition of the educational diversity represented by these schools — whether philosophical, religious, or cultural — could be satisfied through directly funding independent schools and/or possibly through allowing them to be associated with public or separate school boards. Other Canadian jurisdictions have implemented similar models long ago.

The current budget announcement is directed at many parents who have chosen, at significant financial cost, to have their children taught from the world view of their religion or culture, and who at the same time support public schools with their taxes. The vast majority of these parents are middle-income and send their children to not-for-profit independent schools.

The announcement signals the recognition of independent schools as legitimate schools deserving of public recognition and equitable funding. This is a considerable blessing, and is to be welcomed and celebrated.

In the week following this announcement, reaction has tended to be one-sided. Much debate and controversy has arisen based on unfair characterizations of independent schools and of the diversity possible in the public system. All concerned would do well — those who oppose the announcement, and those who welcome it — to seek more nuanced discussions. There is more to be said about the nature of faith and culture-based education, and about the nature and extent of centralized government regulation, accountability, and curriculum determination for all schools, whether public, separate or independent.

It is from this reasoning that Citizens for Public Justice regards this announcement as a tarnished blessing. The blessing of recognizing equity in education is tarnished both by its context and by specific elements of the model announced to create equity.

Caustic environment pits 'us against them'

The announcement comes in the context of severe attacks by this government on public and separate schools in Ontario. Limited funding, increasingly centralized regulations, unthoughtful curriculum changes, and considerable critique of teachers and their unions have created acrimony within the system, borne in large part by the teachers, local schools and boards — and ultimately the students. Many who have special and diverse educational needs within the public and separate schools are thus not well served.

What the province needs is a healthy system of education so that quality education is made possible. Constant critique, tight-fisted budgets, inordinate and centralized

regulations and curriculum requirements, coupled with adversarial tactics, do harm to all of Ontario's schools. That caustic environment means that the announcement of funding equity for independent schools is received as a threat, as competition, as a step towards devolving public and separate school systems.

It is unfair to independent schools, as well as to public and separate schools, to create the appearance (or reality) of funding one kind of school at the expense of the other. It pits them against each other. Surely in a province as wealthy as Ontario all education can be well funded and championed.

Individualistic, consumer-driven model of funding

The model of support chosen by this government to address equity is individualistic and potentially harmful to quality schooling. CPJ has long argued for funding for schools, not tax breaks for individual students or families. Adequate and equitable funding for a diversity of schools would be much healthier for the schools.

CPJ has argued that there are a plurality of world view streams in our society which need to be respected, recognized, and allowed expression in various sectors of society — including in schools. When a particular community — Francophone, Jewish, Catholic, Aboriginal, Protestant, Muslim — seeks to articulate its culture, world view or faith by developing a school and a holistic educational perspective, then it is that school which should be recognized and financially supported as part of the educational framework of a particular jurisdiction. In this way, diverse communities are given opportunity for expression and for publicly living out of their basic values. The school they have created can flourish, develop and contribute as part of the educational matrix of the province.

Providing tax credits imposes a consumer model on education. Individual students and their parents can shop around for education and change schools as they please. The health of the school will be subject to the whims of individual parents rather than enjoy the support of a community of commitment and the financial resources of all of society. Instead, all taxpayers should pay taxes for all schools, including those with alternative perspectives and approaches. Parents can then choose from a variety of strong schools, in keeping with their world view. This is fundamental to the common good.

The challenges ahead, questions unanswered

The announcement and its policy context creates important challenges for everyone concerned, which CPJ asks in the form of questions for different constituencies to consider:

a) For independent schools

• The announcement is accompanied by a statement saying "consultations will identify the appropriate framework for establishing eligibility for this credit." How long will this consultation take? Who will be consulted? Will eligibility criteria be based on family income? Will it be based on types of

schools? What requirements will there be for schools regarding curriculum, admissions policies, teacher hiring, etc? It is important that fair and reasonable standards for all publicly-funded schools be developed, which allow for the genuine diversity intended by this announcement.

• Will schools be tempted to give up on communal funding? Many schools have based their tuition on a per family basis. This has created a sense of community and communal support for the school, rather than an individual purchase-of-education model. How will schools maintain this fundamental concept as they allow parents to qualify for the "per child" tax deduction?

• What will be the actual impact of this type of funding? Will it truly support those sacrificing the most to send their children? The refundable credit certainly is designed to do that, but there is limited information on how the credit will work and for whom.

• Will independent schools join with public and separate schools to raise fundamental questions about the inappropriate changes being demanded by this government in curriculum, testing, etc., which are making educating a significantly onerous job in today's Ontario?

• Will independent schools seek to assert the need for a funding model for schools as soon as possible, and speak out against the privatizing, consumer model of funding currently being proposed?

b) For Ontario's Opposition, who largely oppose this announcement

• Will those who oppose the announcement find a means to be more nuanced about their critique, to acknowledge the diversity of independent schools, and to acknowledge the legitimacy of and need for funding equity for faith- and culture-based education? Alternative schools already exist within the public and separate systems across the province. They give strong credence to finding a means to accommodate schools serving faith and

cultural communities.

• Will the opposition parties, public and separate schools invite independent schools to join in raising fundamental questions about the inappropriate changes being demanded by this government in curriculum, testing, etc., which are making educating a significantly onerous job in today's Ontario?

c) For Ontario's Government

• Will the government soon discuss what it means by "the appropriate framework for establishing eligibility for this credit" and announce when and whom will be consulted in determining eligibility?

• Will the government acknowledge the inadequacy of the announcement for creating equity for schools by giving tax credits to parents, and address soon how it will move to an equitable school funding model to truly address the diversity of schools in Ontario?

• Will the Government refrain from its adversarial approach to education and begin to champion the work done by all schools in Ontario? Will it use consultation to build curriculum and regulations that ensure acceptable social and educational standards, while allowing for diversity of approaches to achieve these standards?

As these questions show, there is much to consider. Perhaps this attempt at equity in education should, in the end, be welcomed for the debate it is engendering. It creates an opportunity for discussion on how to further strengthen all schools in Ontario with equitable funding and with policy development which truly supports schools rather than consumer choice.



Harry Kits is Executive Director of Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ), a national, non-partisan, ecumenical organization of citizens which promotes justice in Canadian public affairs.

Christian Courier

Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association.

Canada mail: Publications Mail Registration No. 09375. Postage paid at St. Catharines, Ont. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1.

U.S. mail: Christian Courier (USPS 518-090). Second-class postage paid at Lewiston, NY. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, Box 110, Lewiston, NY, 14092.

Subscriptions:	Canada	U.S.A.
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two years (52 issues)	\$75.00	\$60.00 (US)
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Education

'One of the most important cases for religious freedom'

James Kwantes

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. — The victory won by Trinity Western University Thursday in the Supreme Court of Canada is being hailed across North America as a landmark victory for Christians — and all interested in religious liberty.

Extra sweet victory

For three men at a small law firm based in Abbotsford, a 30-minute drive from Langley, the decision was extra sweet. Bob Kuhn, Kevin Boonstra and Kevin Sawatsky, lawyers with Kuhn and Company, represented the

Christian university in its long battle against the B.C. College of Teachers.

The three men celebrated quietly when the Supreme Court announced its 8-1 decision Thursday morning.

"It's a great ending to a long journey," said Kuhn, who estimated the team spent "thousands of hours" on the case. "There's a real sense of satisfaction because the court vindicated the position Trinity had taken all along."

A significant decision

Neither is the significance of the decision lost on Kuhn's team, as all three lawyers are Christians: "It's a special case, one we took a great deal of interest in," Kuhn, who attends a Mennonite church, said the legal team also heard from many teachers who were appalled to be funding a legal challenge viewed widely by Christians and those of other faiths as an attack on those who hold religious values.

"They objected to the fact that they are held to support a professional association which is seeking to villainize their own thoughts," he said. "We felt such tremendous support."

The trio traveled to Ottawa in November, and Kuhn made submissions to the Supreme Court on Nov. 9. His adversary, Thomas Berger, the lawyer for the B.C. College of Teachers, is a former B.C. Supreme Court judge and B.C. NDP leader.

The legal arguments were the

beginning of the final chapter in a dispute that started in July, 1996, when the B.C. College of Teachers refused to recognize TWU's teacher education program because of a code of conduct that bans extramarital sex, including gay sex.

Lawyers for the BCCT argued that Trinity's strict code of conduct meant TWU teacher graduates might stigmatize gay students in the classroom. But 8 of 9 Supreme Court judges agreed with the Christian university that there was no basis whatsoever for this fear. The university says it teaches students to love and respect all people, and points out that hundreds of TWU graduates are already teaching in public schools across B.C., with no evidence of discriminatory

conduct by any graduate.

The B.C. College of Teachers had appealed after its arguments were earlier dismissed at two lower courts, the B.C. Supreme Court and the B.C. Court of Appeal.

"It's one of the most important cases for religious freedom that have ever gone to the Supreme Court of Canada," said Boonstra, who attends a Seventh-Day Adventist church.

Journey few lawyers make

Boonstra, a young lawyer, savored the trip to Ottawa to appear before the Supreme Court — a journey relatively few lawyers ever get to make. And Kuhn, who has practiced law for 22 years, acknowledged arguing a case before

the highest court in the land was a "high water mark" in his career.

"It's competing at the highest level," Kuhn said. "Many people who are very good litigators never get to go there."

The case is not the only high-profile battle in which Kuhn lawyers have been involved. The firm is also representing the Surrey school board in its legal battles revolving around a decision to not approve three books depicting same-sex couples for instructional use in kindergarten and Grade 1 public school classrooms. In that case, the B.C. Court of Appeal ruled in the school board's favor on Sept. 20, 2000.

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Good doubt

Our Campus Ministries brochure contains a section where we explain that our task is ecumenical, pastoral, prophetic, and theological. Under "theological" we have this paragraph:

University is a place in which searching, questions, and doubt occur. Campus Ministries provides a faith environment in which God's response to our searching and questioning can be discussed and celebrated.

Pillars of suspicion

They say that the pillars that hold up the university today are the suspicions of Marx, Freud and Nietzsche. Doubt, then, is the beginning of all knowledge and rigorous skepticism is the path to truth. These are the tools of the honest scholar. There is a sly playfulness in the air these days as professors "deconstruct" some of the long-held beliefs of students, showing that all beliefs derive through historical circumstances rather than fall from heaven.

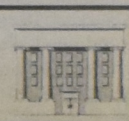
Whether this is enlightening to students or "endarkening" depends on how the student understands the deconstruction process. To watch a student come to the realization that her particular brand of Reformed theology is culturally conditioned and not necessarily The Only True Revelation of God in Jesus Christ And Everyone Else is Dead Wrong is a wonderful thing (or any other denomination at that). The world opens up at university through some doubting. But to have a student come in my office to tell me he does not 'know who he is and whether he can know anything' is true, starts to border on a form of psychological distress — one in which the world closes in.

Doubting milk is everything

Doubt is a necessary step towards maturity. I've addressed student groups on campus and told them that if they are ever to progress to the "solid food" that Paul talks about they will first have to doubt that "milk" is all there is (see 1 Cor. 3:2 and Heb. 5:12-14). You have to doubt that what you know is all there is to know if you are going to be open to unlearning, re-learning, and more learning. Doubt

Campus Culture

Peter Schuurman



your self-sufficiency and turn to a bigger God in trust.

Doubt, however, cannot be a way of life. Doubt alone collapses in on itself as one begins to doubt the doubts. Those doubts in turn can be doubted, and so on, until vertigo is reached. This is why doubt is a means and not an end. The end is a deeper maturity, if not a blissful joy. For where joy abounds, doubt is suspended, and we live before the face of God, basking in his love and glory. Praise erupts, consummating the gratitude we feel for the grace that surrounds us, and we turn to our neighbors in love and service.

An invisible God

I'm leading a book study on Philip Yancy's latest book entitled *Reaching for the Invisible God: What Can We Expect to Find?* He claims that "doubt is the skeleton in the closet of faith, and I know no better way to treat a skeleton than to bring it into the open and expose it for what it is: not something to hide or fear, but a hard structure on which living tissue may grow."

Many students have come by my office wrestling with doubts. Some doubt their inherited faith, and some doubt their lifestyle of rebellion. This doubt often leads through a time of disorientation, but it often follows with a stronger, more confident re-orientation — hopefully to service in God's world. Frederick Buechner said that doubt is the "ants in the pants of faith." That is to say, it makes you want to move, seek deeper and richer things, and so draw nearer to God and his grace. Doubt

then, in this sense, is not a demon to be exorcised, but a signal of the growing pains of authentic faith.

Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed campus chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont.



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Arts/Media

Why I hate cell phones

Ron De Boer

Am I going crazy or are cell phones taking over the world?

The other day I came out of my classroom and was nearly Nike-stamped by a gaggle of high school girls, one of whom snapped gum and quacked into her cell phone, "I'm right behind you." A girl ten feet away squealed and the two of them waddled off together talking into their cell phones.

Yesterday, I was wandering around the produce aisle at the local supermarket searching for yellow peppers when a woman in a trench-coat and high heels buzzed me with her shopping cart, which she pushed recklessly with one hand while hollering instructions about some child disciplinary strategy to her husband on her palm-size cell phone.

And this afternoon, my brother popped over for a coffee and an opportunity to make more excuses for his Toronto Maple Leafs when suddenly his cell phone jingled and he spent the next ten minutes talking to some customer from another city in my living room.

I'm no Luddite

Now, I'm no Luddite. You've heard of the Luddites, those early 19th Century English protestors of new technology. The term Luddite — named after Ned Ludd, the textile worker who brought together bands of people who literally destroyed machinery that was taking their jobs — has come to define anyone opposed to technological change. While I sometimes feel Ned's rage, I do like technology. I own a computer and even create websites. I stare at a TV once in a while and even heat up cold rice pudding in the microwave.

But I hate cell phones. I hate that I have to listen to strangers talk loudly into their cells because they've forgotten where they are — their bodies are in Canadian Tire but their minds are in a kitchen somewhere. I hate being placed on pause by someone whose cell phone rings and they zone out immediately as they check pockets, push buttons and read the number flashing on their digital read-out. Imagine someone walking up to the friend you are talking to after church and demanding her attention by blowing a whistle. Worse, imagine your friend walking away with her! I know what Ned Ludd would do, and it wouldn't be pretty. And I hate the fact that everyone has forgotten the novelty of the cell phone and are convinced they need one — including my wife and kids!

You say some people do in fact



HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN ILLUSTRATION

Five wise virgins... and one on a cell phone.

need a cell phone. Like teenagers. Now teenagers can call if they're in trouble late at night. My question is why are teenagers in a risky situation late at night? I'll tell you why. Because the cell phone has allowed them to be! The same argument can be made for families who arm every kid and spouse with a cell phone. With double income households and children eating microwave-packaged on-the-run breakfasts and heading out the door to school, part-time jobs and socials, the cell phone has given us a sense of connection. At least we can talk to one another any time. Oh, *contraire!* The cell phone, with its false sense of community, has allowed our families to feel less guilty about becoming fractured in our break-neck culture.

Life-threateningly urgent

The cell phone allows *everyone* to get a hold of *everyone else* at all times. That's important because most of what we have to say to people is extremely urgent, even life-threateningly. You might say, "Oh, but I use the cell phone only when I have to — like when I'm five minutes from home and I phone my wife to say I'll be home in five minutes." Or when I'm in the video store and can't decide on *Action* or *Comedy* so I call my teenaged son who also can't decide.

I like the commercial in which business types are attending some kind of beach-side get-together. But no one is eating, listening to music or talking to one another. Everyone is on his or her cell phone. Finally, a woman looks around, realizes the absurdity of the situation and heaves her cell

phone into the lake. Everyone begins throwing their cells into the water, even the really important looking guy in the pin-striped suit and designer eyewear. Soon, they're all drinking some soda and having the times of their lives — with people who are actually with them. I think this is the first time I've ever defended a cola commercial!

Inventing a need

But it is the commercials *about* cell phones — Bell Mobility, Fido, Nokia — that communicate the sense of normalcy of cell phones. The basic message is "everyone is using them and we'll show you all the interesting and necessary ways you need one, too." Do you see what's happening? Once we accept the widespread popularity of technology like cell phones, we begin thinking up all kinds of ways we need them, ways which, astoundingly, never occurred to us before.

To me, the cell phone ads are of the most sociologically offensive commercials on the air. In a recent one, a cell phone rings and everyone in a restaurant jumps to answer it and then simultaneously speak to persons *not present* in the room. Then they all hang up simultaneously. The commercial ends with everyone saying, "Now, where were we?" Soon everyone will have a cell phone and will be able to experience these out-of-body lifestyles. Imagine a roomful of bodies whose minds are elsewhere! It sounds like something out of a Ray Bradbury science fiction novel.

The majority of high school students sitting in my classroom

now have a cell phone, complete with text display so that they can send each other messages. Love notes have become *soooo* digital! In the old days of phones, a school might have a single pay phone and a couple of office phones for student use if they got sick and had to call home. Now parents call their kids, kids call their parents and mostly kids call other kids. You'd think with all this open communication, we'd be getting along a lot better.

Party line phones

I'm not too young to remember the days of the party line phones. I lived on a farm near Owen Sound, and we had to share our phones with three other farmers, one of whom had no qualms about listening in and even participating in our private conversations. Imagine having to share a phone with three other households. Today, each household has three different phones!

I guess I could have predicted the coming of the cell phone years ago. My mother loved the phone — still does. She and my Aunt Audrey could talk for hours. I once watched my mother cook an entire hot meal, bake a pie and sew my father's overalls while talking to Aunt Audrey on the phone. If she could've had a phone attached to her ear and a microphone at the corner of her mouth she probably would've ploughed a field and milked the cows while talking to Aunt Audrey.

No wonder the convenience of the cell phone was developed. Multi-tasking has become necessary to keep up in this culture. We can't just talk to someone — we have to be accomplishing something, too.

Ned Ludd is chuckling

Some experts say cell phones might cause brain problems — headaches and such, maybe worse.

We won't know for another ten years since it is a relatively new technology. My brother says he hears a distinct buzzing on the left side of his head some days. I have a feeling somewhere in the great hereafter, Ned Ludd is chuckling. For with every new technology is a dark side — physically and sociologically.

And maybe even spiritually. We've known for years the Lord has had a cell phone. We can call him any time, any place, and he'll answer. It's never out of range and we don't even have to pull over to the curb to talk. Yet the cell phone we humans have developed seems to me just another device designed to distract us from what's really important — our relationships with those right around us: our children, friends, and many neighbors.

I'm not saying I'll never own one. Remember my insistent wife and daughters who constantly tell me I just don't get it. I, too, am a child of my culture. My kids will grow up thinking the cell phone is a basic necessity...and someday I might believe that, too. After all, I did trade in my abacus for a calculator last year.

Sorry, Ned.

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Church

Deputy Prime Minister gives assurances over residential schools

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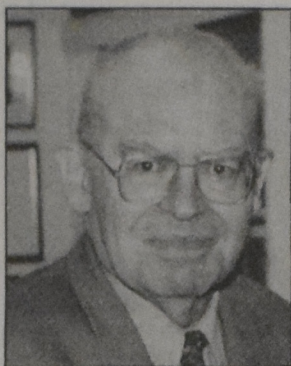
TORONTO — On May 17, Herb Gray, Deputy Prime Minister of Canada, gave assurances to the House of Bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada that the federal government is now in a position to "move from dialogue to formal discussions, leading to an agreement" in the ongoing matter involving residential schools litigation.

More than 7,000 people have brought legal actions against the federal government and several church organizations seeking damages for a range of abuse claims in the schools, which were operated by Ottawa with the help of the churches.

Gray told the Anglican delegation he had received a definitive mandate from Cabinet to bring the schools crisis to a satisfactory conclusion by initiating direct "negotiations" with the four church denominations named in litigation.

No desire to see church bankruptcies

Gray assured Anglican leaders the government takes the view that church organizations "play a valu-



TOM HANSON/CANAPRESS

Deputy Prime Minister Herb Gray

able, far-reaching role in Canadian civil society" and reiterated his view that the government has "no desire to see the churches driven into bankruptcy" as a result of the residential schools litigation.

The Anglican Church includes more than 200 congregations made up primarily of Indigenous persons, and it has funded extensive community-based healing efforts since 1991. These operations are funded through the church's national body, the General Synod, which is projected to run out of

funds before the end of this year.

The Anglican delegation took the opportunity to underscore its deep concerns over the approach taken by the Federal Department of Justice, which has taken an aggressive stance in repeatedly naming the Anglican Church as a third party defendant in cases brought against the government as primary defendant. In more than 40 per cent of the cases involving the General Synod, it is being sued directly by the Department of Justice. Those are the cases that have predominated in the courts so far and generated the majority of legal fees.

Recently the bishops were shocked to learn that "more than 99 per cent of our spending to date has been on litigation — most of it generated by actions of the Department of Justice — and less than one per cent on settlements."

Schools not abusive

The *National Post* recently published an interview with a man who spent six years examining residential school archives — John Siebert. His findings challenge those of the Royal Commission on

Aboriginal Peoples describing these schools as "inherently abusive" and which prompted charges of "cultural genocide".

Here are some of Siebert's findings (summarized by Ian Hunter in an article in the *Post*):— Siebert concludes the residential schools were never intended to assimilate Indian children but only to educate and assist them.

— Most Canadian natives never attended a residential school. Between 1890 and 1965, native attendance at residential schools averaged 7,100 students, compared with 11,400 annually attending day schools. As of 1960 (assuming that going back 40 years might satisfy historical revisionism), 9,109 native students were in residential schools compared with 40,637 native students in regular day schools.

— Native children attending residential schools were not stripped of their beliefs and forced to become Christians; as early as 1871, 53 per cent of Canada's 3.6 million Indians identified themselves as Protestant; 43 per cent as Roman Catholic.

— Not only did some Indian

bands petition for residential schools, but when the government of Canada wanted to close a church-run residential school near Calgary in 1962, the Stony Nation band hired a lawyer to oppose the closure.

— Siebert concludes that television was a more important factor in the loss of native culture than residential schools.

Siebert contends that the Commission's intention was to portray the residential schools as the source of all social and economic problems gripping many aboriginal communities today. "All the alternative, or moderating voices on this subject," he says, were suppressed in the report in order to prompt a public inquiry, which was never held.

Another *National Post* article relates that when *Alberta Report* published an article arguing — persuasively — that many aboriginals have pleasant memories of residential schools, it was slapped with a Human Rights complaint that accused the magazine of promoting discrimination and "expos[ing] First Nations people to hatred or contempt."

India singled out for violating religious freedom

Michael Fischer

HONG KONG (Compass) — The U.S. has warned that India is close to being labeled a "country of particular concern" for violating religious freedom and failing to safeguard the rights of religious minorities. In a strongly worded report released in Washington May 1, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom called upon the Bush administration to take up the twin issues of religious freedom and human rights with New Delhi. The Indian government has not reacted to the report.

Dramatic rise in violence against Christians

The chairman of the commission, Elliott Abrams, said violence against Christians was especially troubling because it coincided with the rise of the Bharatiya Janatha Party to power in India in 1998 and the influence of the Sangh Parivar, the family of Hindu nationalist groups. According to the report, "Since January 1998, violence against Christians has increased dramatically in India. In fact, there has been more violence recorded against the Christian community in India in the past two years than in

the previous 52 years since independence." These attacks included killings, torture, rape and harassment of church staff, destruction of church property, disruption of church events, and "attempts to force renunciation of Christianity and 'reconversion' to Hinduism."

The report also referred to the call by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leader K.S. Sudarshan in October 2000 to "nationalize" the minority religions in India and have "an Indian church" like the one in China, as an "alarming development." The report accused the Sangh Parivar of propagating the view that only Hindus are "real" Indians, suggesting that non-Hindus are foreigners and thus deserving of suspicion and even attack. The commission demanded that "the Indian government must continue to make absolutely clear its opposition to any move towards establishing 'nationalized' churches or state-controlled religious institutions or to interfere improperly with relations between Indian religious communities and their foreign co-religionists."

The report noted that as Hindu nationalist groups had gained ground in India, the concerns of

the Muslim community have also heightened. The report expressed concern that "the government was not doing all that it could to pursue the perpetrators of the attacks and to counteract the prevailing climate of hostility, in some quarters in India, against these minority groups."

The commission added it had made "every effort" to travel to India to examine the situation directly, but the Indian government had not yet given it permission to do so. A formal invitation is required for the commission to travel to India in an official capacity.

The commission recommended that the U.S. government take a number of steps to pressure the Indian government to arrest perpetrators of violent acts that target members of religious groups, step up the human rights dialogue with the Indian government and bolster New Delhi's defense of religious minorities. While conceding that the BJP-led government "may not be directly responsible" for instigating the violence against religious minorities, the commission said the government has failed in many cases to prosecute the individuals and organizations involved in the attacks against Christians.

Taliban order Afghan Hindus to wear yellow

KABUL, Afghanistan (EP) — Taliban rulers in Afghanistan announced a new edict requiring Afghani Hindus to wear a distinguishing mark on their clothing. The decision has been compared to the Nazi Germany edict that required Jews to wear yellow stars on their clothing for identification. The ruling also requires women of the Hindu and Sikh faiths to wear veils as Muslim women do in accordance to the Taliban's strict interpretation of Islam.

Hindus in nearby India have denounced the edict, as well as human rights groups worldwide, while Muslims in other nations have labeled the Taliban leaders as "extremists." Critics say the result of the edict will be increased discrimination and persecution against Hindus.

It is not clear if other minorities in Afghanistan, including foreigners, will be required to wear identifying marks. Earlier this year, Taliban rulers faced international criticism for their controversial edict that called for the destruction of statues and art. In March, Taliban military forces scoured the nation and destroyed several Hindu statues, some of them dating back to the sixth century.

The language of Jesus becoming extinct

DAMASCUS, Syria (EP) — Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke, is quickly disappearing from the earth. Once the common tongue of the Middle East, daily use of the language is now limited to three small Syrian villages 40

miles north of Damascus, reports the Associated Press. Residents of the villages, most of them Catholics, say they are committed to passing down the language to the next generation.

Church

Militants blamed for death of three missionaries in northeast India

Anto Akkara

NEW DELHI (ENI) — More than 500 Catholic schools in northeastern India were closed in protest after three missionaries of the Salesian order of Catholic priests and brothers were shot dead by militants on May 15.

All three staff of the Salesian novice house at Ngarian hills 35 kilometres from Imphal, capital of the state of Manipur, were shot dead, apparently by militants with automatic guns. Manipur and surrounding states have a complex ethnic mix and dozens of militant groups fighting for rights for their peoples.

Father Thomas Mulayinkal, Salesian superior in the state, told ENI that apparently the militants

"forced their way into the [novice house] putting an AK47 rifle at the temple of the driver guarding the house, asking him to take them to the superior." Father Paliakara gave them 30,000 rupees (US\$640) which he had in the house, but "they were not satisfied" and shot him. The assistant priest and the brother who rushed in on hearing the shots were also shot dead "in cold blood".

Refusing to heed extortion demands

"Maybe they [the militants] are targeting and punishing us for refusing to heed to their extortion demands," said Mulayinkal.

Father Dominic Lumon, vicar general of the archdiocese of

Imphal, told ENI that in February eight Catholic schools in Imphal Valley decided "not to concede to the extortion demands" of militant groups who had recently demanded the schools pay 500,000 rupees (US\$10,700) each.

"After a few days, our schools had to be closed for a month with militant groups refusing to allow us to function without meeting their demand," said Lumon. "It seems they are taking revenge on the church for defying them. They have attacked a house of prayer to show their resentment."

He said that almost everybody, including government officials, was "forced to make regular contributions" to ethnic militant groups.

He pointed out that Father Shajan Jacob, vice principal of a diocesan school in the region, was shot dead last December, and another diocesan priest survived a similar militant attack in February.

Christian schools looted

Local Christian schools had been looted by armed militants because of the church's reluctance to pay money demanded by militants.

"While Christians are being blamed by some [Hindu groups] for supporting insurgency in the northeast, the tragedy is that it is at the hands of the insurgents that Christian workers are being brutally murdered," the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) said in a statement following this week's murders.

Manipur is one of seven tiny states in India's northeast which are home to a variety of ethnic groups. They nestle between Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Nepal and Myanmar. The seven states have a total population of about 40 million.

While Christians account for only 20 per cent of Manipur's 2.3 million people, three of the seven states in the northeast have Christian majorities. This is at the root of Hindu fundamentalist claims that Christian missionaries are assisting dozens of ethnic militant groups in the region.

"This [the triple murder] disproves the charge that Christian missionaries are supporting militant groups here. In fact, we are the first to oppose the extortion demands of the militants," said Father Lumon.

D. C. Haja Darnei, head of the Presbyterian Church in India, most of whose 900,000 members are in northeastern India, also condemned the murders. Talking to ENI by telephone from Shillong, capital of the mainly Christian state of Meghalaya, Darnei said that "it is time for the churches to come together and plan common strategy to deal with such a vital question. This type of extortion happens in many places."

'I'm So Glad I'm a Part'

"Who are my mother and my brothers? Whoever does the will of God is my mother and sister and brother." Mark 3:33

I officiated at a wedding this past Saturday. As the groom seated his grandparents and parents, the pianist played, "The Family of God," a song written and sung by the Gaithers. I hadn't heard the song in years, but as I listened to the tune, the lyrics I had heard over and over again coming from my parents' old record player (anyone remember those?) came immediately to my mind: "I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God. I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by his blood. Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod, for I'm part of the family, the family of God."

Our spiritual family

As I watched the groom walk up and down the aisle with various relatives or relatives-to-be on his arm, I understood his and his bride's choice of song. He and she each came from good, Christian, church-going families. But the more I watched him and her and the friends who stood up with them on this day, I thought that they really should have played "Family of God" when their attendants were processing. The Gaither song, after all, isn't about our biological or legal families, it is about our spiritual family, our brothers and sisters in Christ. As the second verse says, "Well you notice we say 'brother' and 'sister' 'round here. It's because we're a family and these folks are so dear. When one has a heartache, we all share the tears, and rejoice in each victory in this family so dear."

Before the wedding, I watched as the bridesmaids and groomsmen gathered around the couple and prayed for them. When the couple exchanged their vows, their attendants' eyes filled with tears. When these friends made toasts at the reception, their words were more like prayers of blessing. Even though they had walked down to different music, this was the bride and groom's family of God.

It was an honor, a holy privilege, to be part of such a wedding. Although I counseled this couple, it is their friends, their family of God who will help

Chapter & Verse

Rev. Mary S. Hulst



them keep their vows. Although I signed the marriage license, their brothers and sisters in Christ will be the ones who come alongside and keep this couple faithful to their commitment. And that is what the family of God is all about.

Are we walking with each other?

We often rely on our families of God to help in times of need — births, deaths, illness — but are we walking with each other in the regular duties of life? Are any of the members of your family of God helping you to keep your wedding vows? Are any of them holding you accountable in how you manage your money? Are any of them your support as you rear your children? Do you do any of these things for any of your friends?

To really be a member of the family of God means that we need to walk with each other day in and day out, not just when a crisis comes. This takes energy. This takes commitment. This takes vulnerability. Are you willing to ask pointed questions of your closest friends about their use of money, or their marriages, or their sexuality, or their child-rearing? Are you willing to answer truthfully if those questions are asked of you?

One of the great blessings for this newly married couple is that they are members of the family of God, and their brothers and sisters are walking with them in their marriage from day one. But it's never too late. Seek out a friend, another couple, a mentor, a small group of friends. Seek them out and start to walk with them and invite them to walk

with you. Hold each other up in prayer, ask the hard questions, wrestle for the answers. Truly be a member of the family of God. You'll be so glad you are.



Rev. Mary S. Hulst is pastor of East Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.

U.S. immigration laws do not protect religious refugees well

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — International assistance agency World Relief is asking the U.S. government to complete "unfinished business" regarding the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA). According to Don Hammond, senior vice president of World Relief, U.S. immigration policies need to be changed in accordance to the act. If these changes aren't made, legitimate refugees fleeing religious persecution could be forcibly returned to their countries of origin without a proper hearing, said Hammond.

Prior to 1996, asylum seekers were allowed to plead their cases before immigration judges. Today, a low-level immigration officer at a port of entry may use "expedited removal" to turn away an asylum seeker if the person's documents are not deemed genuine. Asylum

seekers fleeing persecution often cannot obtain the necessary documents from the very government they are fleeing.

World Relief is concerned that legitimate refugees are being forced to return to the terrifying conditions from which they escaped. Hammond cited a University of California report that lists the 101 nationalities with the highest number of rejected asylum seekers. Almost 40 per cent of the countries to which people have been sent back have been cited by Open Doors as countries that severely restrict religious freedom. "In other words," stated Hammond, "over a third of those who were subject to expedited removal from the U.S. were being sent back to countries which are known to persecute Christians."

Cuban churches face dilemma

HAVANA, Cuba (Compass) — Four evangelical churches in a Havana suburb are faced with a dilemma. They can join three officially-sanctioned denominations in a state-approved project to construct a single worship building for churches now meeting illegally in apartments — or risk the government closing them altogether. Churches in the Alamar

community have grown dramatically in recent years, but the government won't grant permission for individual churches to construct their own buildings. For churches not allied with the Cuban Council of Churches, to refuse to participate would provide an excuse for the government to crush them.

News/Poetry/Agriculture

The REC: a family of churches around the globe

CC Staff (with files from Richard van Houten)

The Reformed Ecumenical Council (formerly: Synod) is the first ecumenical organization of which the CRC became a member; in fact, it was one of the founding members in 1946. Besides the churches with which the CRC has established one-to-one ties, the REC member churches are those closest to the CRC confessionally. Representatives of the CRC also

attend meetings of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) (membership suspended), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC), but these are looser ties.

The REC meets every four years. It has 38 denominations in 24 countries, joining in fellowship about nine million Christians. The

last meeting was held last year in Indonesia, when it underwent a substantial reorganization.

CC has carried substantial articles discussing membership in the WCC, so we figured it was time to remind our readers of this family of churches as well. The overview of REC activities was provided by Richard van Houten, the General Secretary, located in Grand Rapids.

'Making All Things New': the Indonesian assembly

An assembly is a many-sided event. People are making friends — with someone from the other

side of the world. They worship together, and the differences they have with one another begin to dissolve. They read Scripture together, and gain insights from each other's experiences. They see sights and sounds in a land new to them. And they think hard about what their churches can do together in the REC.

Much of the assembly was learning. We spent six of our ten working days wrestling with issues in three areas: racism, leadership, and religious pluralism. We did not seek theoretical answers, but in each case looked for the issues that affected our churches in their

pastoral work and in their witness in society. We asked:

— How do we heal racist divisions? In what places can we address the misuse of power? What do we mean when we identify ourselves as ethnic persons?

— How do we deal with people of other faiths? How do Christians relate to our ancestors? Can we pray together with people of other faiths? How do we distinguish witness and dialogue?

— How can we best prepare our leaders? How do we share our resources so that all benefit? How can we address the spiritual

Continued on page 11...

With our every breath

Linda Siebenga

Last spring I received a letter from one of my nieces that ended with the request, "Whistle into the wind for me." You can't disregard a request, so I went out into the mild spring wind that whispers through the bush edging our backyard.

Here the sun leaks through the laughing foliage, the path meanders and the sweet air rises to heaven like incense. Here I find, like Eugene Peterson, that "beauty is our sensory access to holiness."

My niece didn't know she was sending me out on a mission to access beauty with her impulsive request. It was so like her to take a leap into the unknown, be it by metaphor or in the nitty-gritty of life.

Like the leap she took off the cliff in Israel years earlier. A dive she thought possible from below. Her trepidation at the top of the cliff observed by an approaching crowd of Arabs who began clapping and chanting for this lithe, blonde-eye-lashed foreigner to make her descent into the water. Her retelling as exciting as the event.

Or the request in the phone call one spring. What did we think of her getting married in our grain field that summer?

We thought we could handle that. Life is good. We were flexible. Friends and family came, shared our space, ate our Shreddies and witnessed the wedding vows before God under a summer blue sky in a trampled down barley field, with the wind gently blowing through the tall grain around them.

So could I neglect her request? Not at all. As I stood beside the willows and wild raspberries, I not only whistled into the wind for her but I knew a little more clearly that God wants us to whistle into the wind for him with our every breath.

I Whistled Into the Wind for You

*I whistled into the wind for you
a spring gentle one with hints of willow
where silver catkins shivered against
a steely purple clouded sky*

*I whistled into the wind for you
when winging geese skimmed north
like crescendo markings on the horizon
their mellow staccato sounds
as welcome as melting snow to my ears*

*I whistled into the wind for you
while standing still on that path
through the bush brushing past
blushing wild roses and thorny raspberries
tucked in the lush green undergrowth*

*I whistled into the wind for you
when kneeling on the dark garden soil*

*and marvelled at growing things and God
surrounding us with such lavish gifts
and then I whistled into the wind for Him*

Linda Siebenga
Blackfalds, Alta.

Weather watch

This spring, strong winds blacken the sky with dust. Dust devils whirl across newly seeded fields. No rain has fallen here since last August and very little snow over winter. Climatologists say this is the driest it has been in the Edmonton area in 130 years.

The weather has been increasingly dry over the past few years, working up to the present full-blown drought. Until this year, enough rain has fallen during the summer to grow good crops, but there has been very little snow in the winters. As a result, the sloughs are dry.

My grandparents on both sides of the family during the 1930s moved away from dust bowl farms onto irrigated land in Southern Alberta in order to grow feed and other crops. A landmark drought was on. But even in those years, snow accumulated in the winter. In fact, by the time I was born, Nov. 21, 1937, my father felt as though he had already put in a full winter.

Smothered under the snow

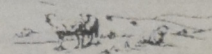
Southern Alberta was also seriously dry in the 1950s. After three years of no rain, my father, desperate for pasture, committed an act of civil disobedience by trailing a large flock of sheep into the neighboring Suffield military bombing range. But it was also in that era we experienced a terrible blizzard. The third week in March 1951, 110-kilometre-an-hour winds whipped a huge dump of snow up into drifts so high and wide they had to be left to melt down to a size that could be moved. A snow drift kept my grandfather's car in his garage for weeks. Thousands of sheep were lost in the area, smothered under tons of snow. When all that snow melted, there was so much water school buses did not run, the trans-Canada highway was near impassable and huge mud holes lingered in country roads.

Another big change in climate has been the temperature. Fifty years ago winter temperatures would drop to -50 degrees F. The tractor-driven feed grinder would not turn. Skin peeled off the frozen faces of those who had to be outside tending livestock. One whole summer back then we never went out to work in the field without a coat along, July included. Not since then have we experienced such bitter cold.

I recently bought 45 tons of hay to help tide us over an extended period of drought. Little hay remains in the province. Convoys of trucks have

COUNTRY COUNTERCULTURE

VERN M. GLEDDIE



moved much Alberta hay to the United States where huge government subsidies help farmers survive the drought that apparently covers a large area of the continent.

Praying for rain

The trucker I hired to haul hay used a lot of colorful and irreverent language to describe the drought and its effect. But he also said, "We are praying for rain." The media also has frequent references to prayer for rain, and it is no longer just a prayer for the farmers. There seems to be a growing fear of what may be a serious regional disaster.

We, too, pray for rain. We reason with God. We tell the Lord the land is parched, it is blowing away, trees are dying, seeds won't germinate, and plants don't grow. We admit we do not deserve rain, but only ask it for greening of the land, feed for animals, and our own survival.

A haunting fear is that rain is being withheld to teach us something about our relationship with God. We have been forgetful of God and the fact he is God. Evil manifestly challenges God. Society seems bent on violating creation order and ignoring divine decrees and the offer of redemption.

Could it be that God's people are the ones who must be brought to their knees, in order to acknowledge him? How ironic and sad, yet how biblical that is. "If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." (II Chron. 7:14).

Yet, we want to analyze and explain the weather. My father was fond of saying, however, "During dry weather all signs fail." He meant that the usual signs of coming rain, such as the humid-

ity-amplified sound of a train whistle or the arrival of sea gulls, mean nothing. Similarly, when God allows drought there is no ultimate worldly explanation. We simply had better pay attention.



Vern Gleddie has a sheep ranch near Edmonton, Alta.

News



PHOTOS (2) COURTESY REFORMED ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

Participants at the recent REC Assembly (above and below) gathered to make friends, worship and learn together.

... continued from page 10
need to be a servant leader?

Did we get answers? A few. We started a Leadership Development Institute. We created a new Commission on Human Relations. And we determined to review six areas of religious pluralism, and come back to the question again in 2004.

Indonesia

Meeting in Indonesia provided an opportunity for us to hear first hand of the challenges facing the Indonesian churches. The unrest in the country's transition to democracy and the sometimes violent confrontations between Muslim and Christians left many Christians anxious about their futures. We were pleased that as Christians from around the world, we could stand with our brothers and sisters in Indonesia.

We had a second opportunity later in the year when we brought our President, Kadarmanto Hardjowasito, to the meeting of the Christian World Communions. His witness there helped galvanize the diverse traditions into action. We continue to follow Indonesian developments closely, and urge our members and friends to keep them in prayer.

India and Myanmar

In April, Richard van Houten attended the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of India. In the hill country of Mizoram, he shared with assembly delegates the history and vision of the REC. The PCI, in turn, sent observers to the Assembly in July.

Like India, Myanmar is also a place where Christians are a harassed minority. Van Houten spent time with the REC member there, the Christian Reformed Church of Myanmar, and became acquainted with other small, emerging churches there.

Nigeria's rising role

The five REC member churches in Nigeria contain the

largest number of individual Christians (more than three and a half million) in any country where REC churches are found. Nuhu Idzi now represents one of our newer members there on the REC executive committee.

In January, Rich van Houten joined a facilitation team to seek reconciliation in an area broken apart by a local war. Persons from three of our member churches there have helped form a Peace, Justice and Reconciliation Committee, as part of the national Reformed Ecumenical Council of Nigeria (not officially related to the REC). This committee continues to work for peace in the area and needs our prayer support.

Jim Lont organized the first of his Review and Renew Consultations in Nigeria in March. Participants from six churches had an opportunity to refresh their vision for youth ministry, for Christian education, and for stewardship.

The REC in East Africa – Youth, AIDS, and a new Council

The REC Secretary for Youth and Christian Nurture, Rev. Jim Lont, visited East Africa twice in 2000. In April he traveled to Uganda and Kenya to prepare the ground for a consultation to review youth ministries.

Following the assembly, the REC East African members agreed to a consultation in November.

Besides thinking about youth ministries in each of the three churches, the consultation also spent some time on the issue of AIDS in their context, and on the issues of responsible development.

The three REC members at the consultation, the Reformed Church of East Africa, the Christian Reformed Church of East Africa and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Uganda, decided they needed to work together more closely and formed a new body, tentatively called the East Africa Reformed Council.

The focus on AIDS results from a vision from our assembly, that the REC should encourage our members to develop ministries to victims of this scourge. The East African meeting was helped by a Kenyan health worker, who brought in a drama team and sparked a frank conversation about AIDS victims in the churches and their communities.

Leadership development

At the last assembly the REC established a Leadership Development Institute to assist our members in their leadership development. There are several elements planned for the Institute:

— The Library and Textbook Program. Over the past decade this program has delivered thousands of books to growing seminaries of our members.

— An Information Network. The REC is collecting up-to-date information to help our members get the right training for the right people. It also charts mission relationships among our members and helps to identify needs and resources for mission.

— The REC provides consultation services to assist in planning for members that request it. Finding and sharing resources should take place in this environment of identifying needs, assuming responsibilities and showing accountability.

The Institute adds to the ongoing work of the Council's four commissions, which between

assemblies is conducted by the Secretariat. The four commissions are:

Commission for Youth and Christian Nurture, Commission

for Theological Education and Interchange, Commission for Mission and Diakonia, Commission for Human Relations.

Web site: www.recweb.org

REC member churches:

Australia:

Presbyterian Church of Australia
Christian Reformed Churches in Australia

Botswana:

Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana

Canada:

Christian Reformed Church in North America

Dominican Republic:

Christian Reformed Church of the Dominican Republic

France:

Evangelical Reformed Church of France (EREI)

Greece:

Greek Evangelical Church

Indonesia:

Indonesian Christian Church of Central Java (GKI)
Church of Toraja Mamasa (GTM)
Javanese Christian Churches (GKJ)
Christian Church of Sumba (GKS)
Southernpart Sumatra Christian Church (GKSBS)
Toraja Church (GT)

Japan:

The Reformed Church in Japan

Kenya:

The Reformed Church of East Africa

Korea:

The Presbyterian General Assembly (Reformed Church of Korea)

Malawi:

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian - Nkhoma Synod

Mexico:

Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of Mexico

Mozambique:

Reformed Church in Mozambique

Myanmar:

Christian Reformed Church in Myanmar

Netherlands:

Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN)

Nigeria:

Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria
Church of Christ in the Sudan Among the Tiv (NKST)
Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria
Evangelical Reformed Church of Christ
Presbyterian Church of Nigeria

Philippines:

Philippine Christian Reformed Church

South Africa:

Dutch Reformed Church (NGK)
Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (NGKA)
Reformed Church in Africa

Sri Lanka:

Dutch Reformed Church in Sri Lanka

Swaziland:

Reformed Church of Swaziland

Uganda:

Christian Reformed Church of East Africa
Reformed Presbyterian Church in Uganda

United States and Canada:

Christian Reformed Church in North America

Zambia:

Reformed Church in Zambia
CCAP - Zambia Synod

Zimbabwe:

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian - Harare Synod
Reformed Church in Zimbabwe



Synod

Derailed by the caboose: Ordination, liturgical acts, and specialized ministries

George Vandervelde

The only study committee report that is being submitted to the synod of the Christian Reformed Synod this summer evokes for me the image of a splendid three-coach train. The unit runs smoothly along sturdy biblical tracks most of the distance. Yet, somewhere along the way, something strange happens, something involving, of all things, a caboose. But we're getting ahead of the story. First, what is the report all about?

The issues

The committee was mandated to deal with a cluster of questions concerning office and ordination. May an elder who leads a service greet the congregation in the name of the Lord? May he, in the absence of the pastor, officiate at the Lord's Supper? May someone licensed to exhort or an elder pronounce the parting blessing? Or must it be turned into a prayer? What about congregations, such as



BETTMANN ARCHIVE

14th century Christian leader John Huss administers communion.

himself, is the heart of the church. Accordingly, "all understandings of ordination and offices, should be rooted in a clear understanding of mission" (276). The report develops the other two elements within this *missional perspective*. The mission of the church involves the whole people of God: "We are called to be a sacrificial presence in the world...." (296). Accordingly, the missional lead theme links directly to the second element, *the priesthood of all believers*. Thirdly, rather than immediately turning to issues concerning particular offices and ordination, the report places such questions within the larger perspective of *leadership*.

It is these biblical-theological reflections that conjure up the image of a splendid train, consisting of three interlinked coaches. Their design and linkage is so superb as to deserve far more extensive description. However, since problems develop around the caboose, we can't linger on the train's promising design. Instead, after elaborating somewhat on the third element, leadership, we will examine the way in which it is coupled to the caboose.

Authority of leadership

Leadership, the report points out, stands in a dual relationship — to Christ, on the one hand, and to his community, on the other: "Christian leaders are called to give of themselves sacrificially so that the presence and power of Christ may be brought to the Christian community and the cares, concerns, joys, and ministries — in short, the entire life of the Christian community — may be brought

to Christ." In thus describing priestly leadership, the report does not lose from view the missional dynamic in which the church exists: leaders "serve and enable the church as a whole to serve the mission to which Jesus Christ has called us" (276). The authority of leadership is given with the relationship of trust and responsibility within which leadership exists. And because responsibility involves accountability, the exercise of authority, too, is held accountable, to Christ and to the community (282).

Opposite directions

The report makes two seemingly opposite moves regarding the relationship of leadership, ordination, and "official acts of ministry." In one direction, the report defines ordination broadly, i.e., as an extension of its understanding of leadership, defined by its dual relationship: The role of church leaders is to act as *Christ's shepherds (or pastors) of the community* (282 and 283). Ordination, therefore, recognizes and institutes this pastoral role (282). On this basis, one expects the report to conclude that any pastoral ministry of church leadership requires ordination. As we will see, this broad definition does play a practical role. But at crucial points an opposite, narrower move comes into play. It involves a tiny caboose marked "OAM".

The more restricted approach tends to take over whenever the report considers the "official acts of ministry." This is understandable, of course, since the phrase intends to delimit. But more is at work. In dealing with the "official acts," the

report for the first time begins to use "power" language. It attributes power — in a rather indeterminate sense — to sacraments, claiming that the Belgic Confession "suggests that liturgy is a sacred drama in which heaven and earth are being moved" (285). Subsequently, the report begins to generalize about sacred rites in which such undefined power seems to inhere, appealing to the Navajo notion of *yilzih*, a term that "denotes anyone or anything that has spiritual power" (285). On the basis of the holiness and power of such acts, the report issues repeated cautions: such acts must be handled with great care.

Ordination in wide scope

The unresolved tension between the broad and the narrow approach to ordination asserts itself in the report's recommendations. The broad approach is fully in evidence in the second of the two recommendations regarding the "official acts of ministry" Here the committee moves directly (unlike the report, by-passing for the moment the question of "ordination") to the situation in which a congregation is without an ordained minister or evangelist. This recommendation deserves to be cited in full:

For the same reason no long-standing, organized congregation of Christians should be deprived of these liturgical acts simply because it cannot provide the presence of an ordained minister or evangelist. These acts are part of the ministry of Christ to his followers. They are entrusted to the congregation and, within the congregation, to its ordained leaders, not to a specific office (296).

The leaders in question here can be none other than the elders.

Ordination in the narrows

The narrow approach to ordination comes into play when the report moves next to its proposals regarding "ordination." While maintaining a broad description in the first two recommendations regarding ordination, in the third its scope suddenly narrows. Astoundingly, this last recommendation emphatically constricts ordination so severely that the only offices that seem to qualify for ordination are those of minister and evangelist: "Ordination is appropriate when, and only when, a person is called to a pastoral role within the church. Leaders fill this role when they are called by the church to perform the pastoral acts of blessing, rebuking, exhorting,

administration of the sacraments, and the ordination of new leaders — in short, the 'official acts of ministry'" (297).

As it reads, this recommendation suggests that in a congregation served by an ordained minister or evangelist there is no room for the ordination of elders and deacons. The committee, of course, intends no such thing. Nevertheless, that a recommendation undoubtedly formulated with great care could end up with such a seemingly restrictive statement is telling. It indicates the inordinate power that the undefined "official acts of ministry" wield when this phrase is allowed to determine the meaning or scope of ordination. The caboose threatens to derail the train.

Youth, music, educational ministers as evangelists

A narrow or constricted view of ordination also asserts itself in the second major area which this report addresses, namely, the place of specialized church leadership, such as youth, educational, or music ministries. Should persons in such ministries be ordained?

In the past, the CRC held to a three-fold ordained ministry — pastors, elders, deacons — neatly patterned after Christ's three-fold office of prophet, king, and priest. When the CRC added a fourth office, however, the tidiness vanished. The floodgates were opened to an endless proliferation of specialized ordained ministries. The present committee proposes a novel way of turning the tide: where ordination is deemed appropriate for specialized tasks, ordain all persons in such ministries as "evangelists."

The proposal to ordain a youth, music, or educational minister as evangelists seems at first glance to exhibit a broad approach to ordination. After all, ordination is in principle appropriate for any specialized ministry. Yet, in a peculiar way, the more narrow view of ordination plays a decisive role. The committee recommends that the office of evangelist "be understood to have the character of pastoral extension."

This terminology seems rather strange, since the report has characterized all church leadership as pastoral: a leader represents the Good Shepherd with respect to his flock. Clearly, this recommendation entails a more limited view of "pastoral." This becomes obvious, when in the final sentence of this same recommendation we read, "Within organized congregations, evangelists serve with and

What renders the report refreshing and even startling is that the initial element, the dynamic of mission, becomes the controlling element of the report.

many in Classis Red Mesa, which must do without an ordained pastor? Are they to be deprived of the Lord's Supper? And what of the relatively recent development of specialized leaders in the church, such as youth minister and education minister? May they participate in a public worship service; if so, how? What qualifications are required? Should a youth minister be ordained? If so, as an elder, a minister, an evangelist — or in a new category? What about a minister of music?

The train: mission, priests, and leaders

The approach of this report is profound and refreshing — even startling. The report is profound in that it develops three interlinked biblical-theological elements as a rich and imaginative framework for dealing with the practical questions which the study committee faces.

What renders the report refreshing and even startling is that the initial element, the dynamic of mission, becomes the controlling element of the report. God's mission of reconciling the world to

under the authority of an ordained minister" (297).

This proposal introduces among the offices a hierarchical ordering that seems inimical to Reformed church polity. After all, not even an elder or deacon works "under the authority of an ordained minister." If anything, the opposite obtains: pastors exercise their ministry under the authority of the body of elders (while the parity of their distinct offices remains intact).

Traditional notions of ordination and official acts of ministry seem to have managed to thwart the magnificent biblical-theological themes which the committee develops in the main body of its report. What is needed is to bring these themes to bear more consistently on the "official acts of ministry" and on the status and role of specialized ministries. Several unresolved issues and problems serve to illustrate this need.

Examining the black box

The major cluster of unresolved problems hide in the caboose, a little black box on wheels. To proceed at crucial points from a list of "acts" constructed by conjecture, or worse, to surround these undefined acts with unqualified sacred powers, is unworthy of a report as profound and promising as the present one. Let's see why.

Arbitrary inclusion and exclusion

What one includes in or excludes from the list of "official acts of ministry" is far more arbitrary than the report acknowledges. In fact, its arbitrariness becomes all the more conspicuous against the background of the report's fine biblical reflections. To realize this, all one need do is to ask a few questions.

If the ministry of reconciliation is the central mission of the church (295), how can one exclude the service of reconciliation in the liturgy from the "official acts of ministry"? Another example: In view of the report's wonderful emphasis on priestly ministry, why would a liturgical expression as pre-eminent as the congregational prayer not make it on the "official acts of ministry" list?

Why, by contrast, should the expression of God's greeting at the beginning of a service — which involves taking upon one's lips a biblical text — be considered one of the sacred power-filled acts that requires for its "right handling" an ordained person? One final example: Why should admitting

someone to full membership — primarily a communal council decision — be treated as an act reserved for someone in primary pastoral leadership? What sacred powers come into play there? And where? Generally, in the reading of the prescribed form? Specifically, in welcoming them to the joys and sufferings of full communion?

Disparate acts

Even the items that by custom and tradition *do* make it to the unofficial list of official acts are highly disparate. Some of the official acts, for example baptism, are rather solitary in their administration. Others are quintessentially communal, such as the admission or excommunication of members.

Since the committee understandably seems especially concerned about the sacraments, let's consider briefly the Lord's Supper. Let's examine the "official actors" in this event. Who are the ones primarily involved in "official acts of ministry"? Is it not the priestly people? This is one sacrament where the act that Christ commands us to do is directed to the congregation: take, eat, remember, believe! The entire priestly people are the celebrants.

Luther and Calvin repudiated the Roman Catholic view that the act which Christ enjoins is that performed by the restricted coterie of priests, who claim the exclusive privilege of doing what Christ does. To be sure, someone officiates at such celebrations, and it is entirely appropriate that this be done by the one who leads the service and proclaims the word. But the administering of this celebration — supervised and co-administered by the consistory — can hardly be placed in the environs of "sacred, powerful acts."

If heaven and earth be moved in this event, as the report claims, this power resides in Christ's presence among the priestly people and especially now in their taking, eating, remembering, believing. Besides, if heaven-and-earth-moving power be the criterion for "official acts," then, zooming to the top of the list would be prayer — admittedly mixed with a little incense (see Revelations 8: 3-5).

Neglected role of council

The indiscriminate appeal to "official acts of ministry" tends to obscure two interrelated questions: what is the role of the consistory and what renders liturgical acts official?

Rather than focussing on



"A sacrament of baptism carried out by an ordained ministry outside the official service of worship, for example, would not be considered an 'official act of ministry.' It would be regarded as a rogue act of ministry."

special, official, negatively delimited acts and moving to undefined notions of "sacred powers" to account for such delimitation, there is a better way, one that comports more fully with Reformed polity. What renders these acts "official" is their occurrence in an official church service.

The obvious retort to this suggestion is to point out that the prohibition of "official acts" is inserted into the church order to distinguish these (unspecified) acts from all other liturgical acts. But the report itself acknowledges that this delimitation occurs in an incidental manner and their identification in an arbitrary manner. Therefore, it is more fruitful to take a few steps back and consider the official nature of the entire worship service.

What renders this service official? Is it not the fact that it is convoked by and conducted under the supervision of the consistory? A sacrament of baptism carried out by an ordained ministry outside the official service of worship, for example, would not be considered an "official act of ministry." It would be regarded as a rogue act of ministry (even if the baptism were to be accepted as valid). Or consider a congregational prayer uttered by a member of the congregation. This is not a private prayer, uttered aloud in a congregation. It is an official act: a pastoral, congregational prayer, an intrinsic part of an official worship service.

These reflections suggest that

whatever guidelines may be adopted as to who officially does what in a worship service, the supervisory role of the consistory or council must play a crucial role. Moreover, within broad denominational and classical guidelines and accountability, the consistory must be accorded the degree of discretion that in Reformed polity is appropriate to the office of elder and the role of the consistory — lest "church order" degenerate into "canon law."

This leads directly to the proposal to subsume all specialized ministries under the office of evangelist. In addition to the concern about the proliferation of offices, a second concern clearly evident is that of supervision. It is partly for this reason that the report proposes that the office of evangelist and thus all specialized ministries, be considered an extension of the pastoral office and, where possible, be placed under the authority of an ordained minister. In this regard, too, the report does not consider the specific role of the consistory or council to which all ordained ministries are accountable. The current report refers to shared leadership (e.g., 288, 289, 296) but does not accord it an integral role, especially as exercised by the consistory.

Evangelist as extension — youth or music minister as 'evangelist'

Moreover, the proposal to view an evangelist as an extension of

pastoral leadership and to subsume all specialized ministries under the office of evangelist flies in the face of the overall biblical direction of the report. If mission is central to the being of the church, as the report rightly maintains, the evangelist can hardly be treated as an extension of something else, called pastoral leadership. If anything, the reverse makes more sense: pastoral leadership as an extension of evangelist leadership.

The report's recommendation does, of course, manage to stem the tide of proliferating specialized ordained ministries. Yet, within the strong missional framework, this report's argument for subsuming other offices under that of evangelist, logically suggests far more radical solution. Rather than simply putting the brake on further proliferation, the logic of the report calls for the reversal of present proliferation, namely, collapsing the four offices into one, that of Evangelist. All specialized ministries would then be considered as differentiations of the office of missional leadership.

As it stands, the proposal to extend the office of evangelist only to all offices beyond the traditional three seems entirely arbitrary. More importantly, it runs counter to the missionary thrust of the report.

Continuing the biblical journey

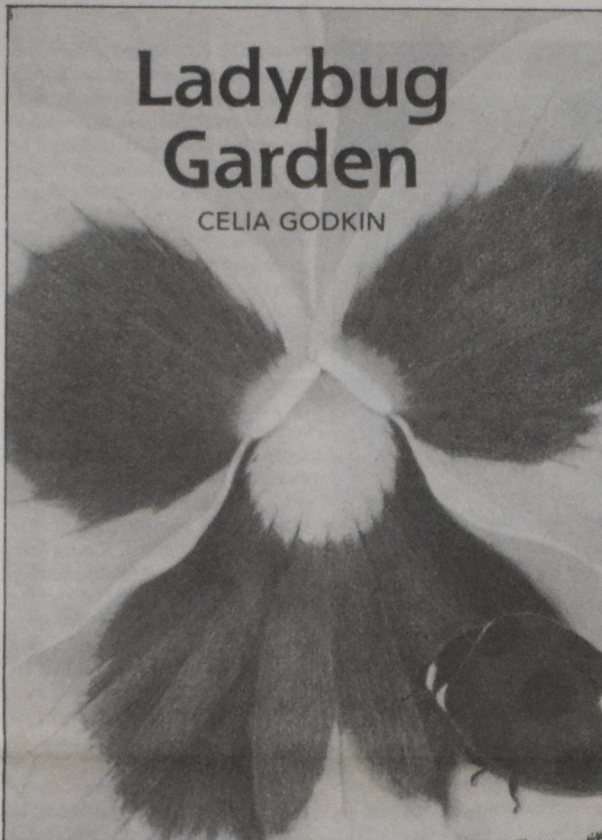
Given the unresolved problems entailed in this committee's recommendations, it would be unfortunate if the Synod were to make any hasty decisions. After decades of discussions and proposals, a degree of impatience is understandable. On the other hand, one can also turn the argument around: in view of the decades of discussion, it is worth waiting a year or two to mine the rich biblical theological reflections in this report in a more consistent and thorough examination of what renders any liturgical act "official," the supervisory role of consistory or council, and the meaning of ordination of elders and deacons, as compared to the ordination of full-time ministries. Why allow an ill-fitting caboose to derail a train this splendid?

*Agenda for Synod 2001, Grand Rapids, pp. 263-301; numbers in parentheses refer to the page numbers of this report, available online: www.crcna.org.

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Book Reviews

How does your garden grow?



Ladybug Garden

CELIA GODKIN

Reviewed by Jeanette Romkema

"The beans are up!" shouts my son, Reuben. My husband, son Jude and I look up from the game of croquet we are playing and run to our vegetable garden. As we excitedly point to the early seedlings sprouting up through the furrows of the well-raked soil, I wonder why I have such a physical psychological response to growing beans. Is it connected to memories of my grandmother's "snijboontjes" (Dutch for French-cut beans)? Is it part of my chemical make-up after years of "meat, potatoes, and vegetables" (the traditional Dutch meal)? Is it a response to many injured fingers while trying to cut beans at the right angle recreating those served by family in the Netherlands? Whatever the reason, the growing, preparing, serving, and eating of green beans holds special meaning to me.

Below I offer books that share this sense of wonder and excitement of gardening and walking in God's creation.

Butterfly House

Written by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Greg Shed

New York: Scholastic Press, 1999.
ISBN 0-590-84884-4 32pp.

Ecology picture book for elementary primary grades.

A young girl saves a butterfly larva from a hungry blue jay and decides to build a temporary home for it. After hours of painting, cutting and pasting she re-creates a gray shoebox into a feast of colour, texture, and shapes. It is only after she lets the transformed butterfly go and her garden is suspiciously filled with Monarchs that she understands the impact her hours of love and care have had on the life of her larva and many generations of butterflies. The lyrical language of award-winning writer and poet Eve Bunting along with the inspirational oil paintings of Greg Shed combine into a magical celebration of nature, the life cycle, and intergenerational relationships.

In the Garden

Written by Carolyn Marie Mamchur & Meguido Zola, illustrated by Anne Hanley

Winnipeg, MN: Pemmican Publications Inc., 1993.

ISBN 0-921827 48pp.

Fiction picture book for elementary junior grades.

Eleven-year-old Joyce is Métis and lives with her family in the city. When her grandmother dies and leaves a knotted handkerchief covered with forget-me-nots and filled with seeds, Joyce is confused and disappointed. Through hard work and determination she recreates her family's junk-filled back yard into a lush vegetable garden. But it is only when the produce sustains members of the community as they go on strike against injustice, that she learns the full potential of her grandmother's gift. This heart-warming story of courage and determination carries a message of hope: hope for justice, hope for the earth, and hope for the young generation. Rough primitive illustrations add to the earthy quality of this unique book.

Ladybug Garden

Written & illustrated by Celia Godkin

Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1997.

ISBN 1-55041-092X 38pp.

Ecology picture book for elementary junior grades.

One day a gardener looks at his beautiful gardens and decides that if he could get rid of the "bad insects," his vegetables and flowers would be perfect. But after he sprays, his crop gets totally eaten, and he realizes that he has changed the healthy natural balance he had. Ladybug Garden is a wonderful mixture of science and storytelling, ecology and stewardship. Godkin offers a close look at the world of insects and demands the respect they deserve. Spraying lawns and gardens is a growing concern for adults and this book offers a tool for children to enter into the discussion.

Me and Mr. Mah

Written by Andrea Spalding, illustrated by Janet Wilson

Victoria, BC: Orca Book Publishers, 1999.

ISBN 1055143-177-7 32pp.

Fiction picture book for elementary primary grades.

Young Ian moves to the city away from his father and everything he knows and loves on the farm. "We might as well have gone to the moon. The yard was a moonscape patchy grass and dirt, surrounded by a prison-like fence." But soon Ian meets the old Chinese-Canadian man next door and everything is transformed. This intergenerational story shares intimate moments of anger, loneliness, courage, and unconditional love. A multi-award winning book unique in its ability to bridge cultures and generations, it offers visual images of two very different lives connected by a love for the outdoors.

Someday a Tree

Written by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Ronald Himler

New York: Clarion Books, 1993.

ISBN 0-395-76478-5 32pp.

Ecology picture book for elementary junior grades.

An ancient but vibrant oak tree grows in a field next to Alice's house. When she discovers the grass around it is turning yellow and its leaves are turning brown, a "tree doctor" is called. Someone has spilled chemicals under the tree. Although Alice and the townspeople do not succeed in rescuing it, profound lessons are learned about stewardship and the interconnectedness of God's creation. Soft minimalist watercolor paintings along with sensitive words make this a moving story of hope. Great for stimulating discussions about stewardship, waste, responsibility, the environment, and trees.

The Gardener

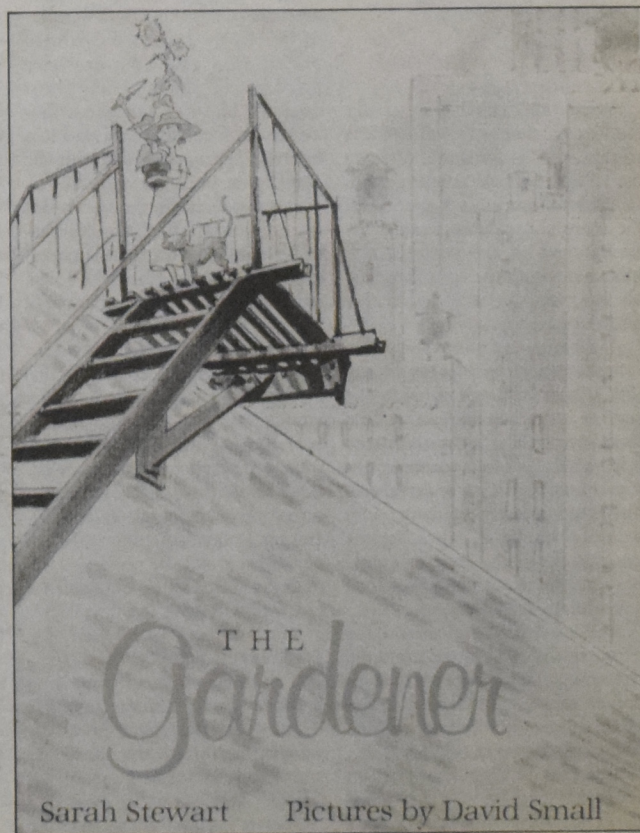
Written by Sarah Stewart, illustrated by David Small

New York: Farrar, 1997.

ISBN 0-374-32517-0 32pp.

Fiction picture book for elementary primary grades.

Lydia Grace Finch has to stay with her uncle in the city while her parents work through difficult financial times. Although she knows nothing about his bakery business, she works at transforming his community, kitchen, and heart with the colors and fragrances of flowers. Written entirely in the form of letters, the book shares Lydia's frustrations at living with a man who seems angry at the world but also her joy of slowly bringing happiness into his life. Playfully illustrated, this book set in the Depression-era challenges the assumption that a city must be gray and devoid of nature. A heart-warming read.



News/Sports

After the Buzzer

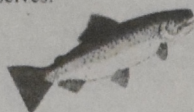
Tim Antonides



August on Pennask Lake

Trips to Pennask Lake always started around 5:00 a.m. My dad would wake Rob and Doug (my brothers) and me on a Saturday morning with promises of five-pound rainbow trout and hot coffee. That was all we needed.

In the truck by 5:30, fully loaded with boat and motor. We flew up Highway 97 for an hour, turned left on a washboard called Pennask Lake Road that chopped along for half an hour, and then crawled along the final four miles of potholes on the lake access road — a road passable only by pick-up or four-wheel-drive, we smugly reminded ourselves. Fishing talk crackled through the cab of the truck.



Mountains, water, fish

We got to the lake and soon the boat was gliding through glassy mountain water. We threw out our fly lines and were puttering against a backdrop of fir and pine trees. A damp chill from the morning air was all it took for my dad to get out the big silver thermos full of creamy coffee. We started sipping, and suddenly the first strike of the day would send one of our reels screaming. A cold, fierce rainbow trout in a cold mountain lake was fighting for its life. It was all about this. Mountains. Water. Fish. Being with Dad and the guys.

I think about that sometimes. I want to recapture the atmosphere of those days spent on Pennask Lake. I've taken my fishing rod and gone with a friend up to a trout lake. Fun — but not the same. When my wife and I go camping and I get a chance, I try to find a spot on a lake and cast out for some rainbows or cutthroat. It's different. There's a missing dimension.

Life more complicated now

I think the biggest difference between my fishing experiences now and growing up is an impatience I've developed. Life is more complicated now. There are more things to think and worry about. For a ten-year-old sitting in the boat fulfillment was as close as the next cast. Now, I spend my time trying to achieve a balance between romanticizing the past, preserving the pleasures of the present, and constantly coming up with new dreams for the future. It never ends.

I take the blame for a large part of this. I've always been an impatient guy and tended to shape my own world rather than let God shape it. I've also seen a lot of people my age who were once vital and exciting slowly rot in boring, unimaginative lives where they walk a certain line to fit a mold — in their churches, careers, and social life. I'll do anything to avoid that.

There are also some cultural forces at work here. Having said that, I have to admit that I'm easily tired with people who claim to always be under "spiritual attack." I don't think that adversity and difficulty are necessarily an attack from the Evil One. They're part of living in a sinful, imperfect world. At the same time, I think Satan is using the postmodern, homeless character of our world in a powerful way to breed discontent and angst. That feeling of never quite being at peace is insidious.

I miss those days in the boat on Pennask Lake. It's very possibly time to let God unfold things as he will and to appreciate the relationships he's allowed me. Enjoying the world and the people he's given us to share it with. That, more than anything, is what those fishing days were all about.

Hot coffee and cold trout didn't hurt either.



Tim Antonides teaches Grade 8 and is a basketball coach at Surrey Christian School in Surrey, B.C.

Hamilton Christian High raises \$47,000 for World Vision in 30 Hour Famine



Students on the eight-kilometre walk from the school to McQueston Park.

Rachel Kraft

HAMILTON, Ont. — On May 4 and 5, more than 430 students and staff at Hamilton District Christian High School participated in World Vision's 30 Hour Famine to raise over \$47,000 in sponsorship pledges.

Teacher Chris Berghuis and a team of 20 students organized and promoted the drive over a two-month period. Participants went without food for 30 hours, drinking only water and juice, in order to raise money and awareness for the work of World Vision Canada. The amount raised by the school put them in the top two or three groups in Canada.

Other school events held during the two days included a Thursday morning assembly with speaker Christopher Randall, the founder

of Helping Others Inc. and the marketing director of 102.9 K-Lite FM. On Thursday afternoon students went on a two-hour mass walk from the school to T.B. McQueston Park, escorted by a bright yellow Hummer, courtesy of Door Dudes, and by a horsedrawn wagon, courtesy of Azurex, which was also part of a food drive organized by the school.

At the park, the students posed for an aerial photograph for future World Vision promotional videos and they were entertained by a contemporary music ensemble from the school. Awaiting them on their return was a concert by a local band called Dumb as Sheep. Three o'clock Friday afternoon, the hungry students were rewarded for their efforts with a

school barbecue.

Every day around the world 30,500 children die from hunger and disease. World Vision will use the money raised by the 30 Hour Famine to fund projects that will help these children and their families. To date, projects funded by World Vision have aided people in Rwanda, Cambodia, Romania, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Sudan, Kenya, Guatemala, Tanzania, Honduras and Canada.



Chris Berghuis, science teacher and 30 Hour Famine organizer, gives instructions at the post-walk rally.



Members of the leadership team tallying pledge totals: (from left) Kate Hoekstra, Jolene Koornneef, Erin Vanderwillik, Rebecca Snyder, Noelle Hamstra.

Opinion/News

Women advisers to synod

In the month of June the Christian Reformed Church will hold its annual synodical meeting. Delegates from all over North America "will meet to lead the Christian Reformed Church into new and challenging areas of ministry" (Agenda for Synod 2001, p.7).

Synod meets every year for just over a week. During that time two hundred or so delegates, pastors and council members, meet together every day and most evenings to discuss matters pertaining to the church.

Synod from different perspectives

I attended synod one year as a spouse of a delegate. I observed the proceedings from a distance and witnessed the sense of connectedness that develops as people spend time together discussing matters close to their hearts, their faith and their church. I was at synod in 1994 when it was decided that the church was not ready to open all offices to women. I remember sitting on the balcony listening to the outcome of the vote and feeling an overwhelming sense of loss.

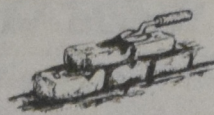
This year I will be attending synod as a woman adviser. Women advisers are new to Synod. Last year it was decided "that until the review of the women in office decision in 2005, synod make provision to have up to seven women from various regions in the CRC serve as advisers to synod" (Acts of Synod 2000, p.699).

The women advisers were chosen by the Board of Trustees at their meeting in March, 2001. The Board made its choice based on names submitted by congregations and classes. Every church and classis had the opportunity to nominate a woman. The eight women advisers are:

Stephanie Baker-Collins
Mary J. Bouwma
Sharon Jim

Building Trust

Vicky Van Andel Ed.



Carol Kramer
Elisabeth Smeda
Sherry Ten Clay
Vicky Van Andel
Rose Van Reken

The Agenda for Synod 2001 describes the qualifications and responsibilities of the women advisers as follows:

1. Women advisers shall serve on the advisory committees of synod. They shall have the privilege of the floor but not the right to vote.

2. Women advisers may appear before any advisory committee for the purpose of speaking to the committee about any matter referred to it.

3. Women advisers shall be present at plenary sessions of synod, where they shall have the privilege of the floor for the purpose of advising synod on matters before it, subject to the accepted rules governing discussion. On important questions, the chair or any other members of synod may request their advice.

The Agenda also states that an effort will be made to appoint several advisors to a two-year term so that each year there will be some experience and some new advisers.

Women have often not been aware of what goes on at synod because they have not been represented. Hopefully that will change soon. Inviting women advisers to attend synod is a visible step towards validating the voices of women. It indicates a desire to *build trust*. I want to respect it. May God bless everyone at synod with a spirit of gentleness, wisdom and understanding.

Vicky Van Andel is the editor of this column, and invites anyone who would like to contribute to the column to contact her via fax at: 1-780-473-0970, or via e-mail at: vanandel@oanet.com

Arkansas covenant law toughens standards for divorce

ARKANSAS (Newsroom) — Joining a movement to strengthen marriage by requiring counseling and limiting the grounds for divorce, Arkansas became the third state in the U.S. to adopt a covenant marriage policy.

Under the voluntary Covenant Marriage Act, Arkansas residents would sign an agreement acknowledging that marriage is a lifelong commitment. They would receive authorized counseling before marriage and could divorce "only when there has been a complete and total breach of the marriage covenant commitment" and after taking "all reasonable efforts" to preserve the marriage, including counseling.

'A state of marital emergency'

Governor Mike Huckabee last year declared "a state of marital emergency" and set a goal of halving the state's divorce rate by the year 2010. "Arkansas has the second highest divorce rate in the country," he said. "We will now give couples the ability to choose a higher level of commitment. Couples choosing covenant marriages will take extra steps of preparation for a lifelong commitment by attending counseling sessions prior to receiving their marriage licenses. These couples will agree that if their marriages should ever run into trouble, they'll seek counseling before divorces are granted."

Arizona and Louisiana previously enacted similar legislation. Iowa and Texas legislators will consider covenant marriage bills this year, and more than a dozen states are studying similar bills in an attempt to reverse a national divorce rate of about 50 per cent.

Louisiana legislator Tony Perkins, who introduced his state's covenant marriage law more than two years ago, told Newsroom in a 1999 interview that "government has a vested interest in the success of marriages," a contention that is supported by some studies. "It is government (taxpayers) that foots

the bill for failed marriage in the way of increased police and correction costs associated with teenage delinquency, through increased social costs by way of child poverty and the related problem of teen pregnancy."

Divorce is bad for society and very harmful for children, according to a June 2000 study by the conservative Heritage Foundation, a Washington, D.C. public policy research institute. "It weakens relationships, communities, cities, states, and the nation," authors Patrick Fagan and Robert Rector said in "The Effects of Divorce on America." The study went on to say, "The increases in the rates of child abuse and neglect, crime, behavioral and emotional problems, health problems, cohabitation, future divorce, and out-of-wedlock births as well as the decrease in religious worship, educational attainment, and income potential should alarm every policymaker and community leader. The effects of divorce transcend generations and contribute to the all-too-evident cycle of social decay."

The authors favor covenant marriages because they lengthen the divorce process by two years, "thus applying a brake on the divorce." Community Marriage Covenant projects, which provide premarital preparation and education programs for couples planning to marry and mentoring programs for couples in troubled marriages, can save up to 80 per cent of marriages headed toward divorce, reconcile more than half of the separated couples, and enable 80 per cent of those in stepfamilies to become successful parents and partners, according to the study.

"Many cities that have undertaken a Community Marriage Covenant project have seen divorce rates plunge," the authors said. "For instance, in Modesto, California, the divorce rate has fallen 35 per cent in 10 years; in Kansas City, the rate dropped 35 per cent in two years. Community Marriage Covenant projects are tangible, practical, and results-oriented."

TIME FOR NEW FURNITURE?

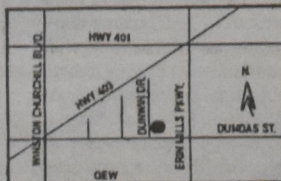
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"WE STAND BEHEATH OUR ROOFS"

News Comment

Nose for News



Bert Hielema

I WAS THERE, IN St. Paul's River Center's ballroom, on May 17, where, promptly at 10.30 a.m., President Bush unveiled America's energy proposal. Next to me were sitting members of his White House staff following his speech on paper exactly as they had written it for him. To them it meant another job done; to me it meant that the U.S.A. had officially started its war against nature. The G.O.P., as the Republican Party is often called, now stands for Gas, Oil, Plutonium — the basic weapons in this cosmic conflict. The cold war is finished. The Warming War has formally begun.

WAR. NO FANFARES. NO direct declaration. No word about 'war' in the media, but I know that I know because I feel it to be true. My antennae tuned to Calvinistic carefulness tell me this. The protesting young people outside suspected it, but the 1500 well-dressed St. Paul-Minneapolis elite inside the River Center applauded loudly, as people did when World War I started, expecting a painless experience.

"It's the economy, stupid," Clinton's mantra. That's what this National Energy Plan, too, is all about. The economy has to grow at all costs, even the life of the planet. Greenspan's job is to look after the money part. That's why he lowered the interest rate last week. According to him and all economists, when consumption falls, the rate of interest must fall, too, to stimulate investment and so fill the gap left by the smaller appetite for goods. During the Dirty Thirties this classic answer did not work. Today, in Japan, where the interest rate approaches zero, it does not work; yet, Greenspan has only one remedy in his arsenal: cuts in interest and increase of money supply.

I AM NOT A HISTORIAN — just an old man who reads a lot of history, also economic history. I see an interesting — and frightening — parallel between Germany in the 1920s and the U.S.A. today. In 1923, due to inflation, private savings in Germany completely

disappeared. In 2001, due to excess consumption, private savings in the U.S.A. have completely disappeared. In 1923 Germany relied almost completely on foreign loans to finance its economy. In 2001 the U.S.A. almost completely relies on foreign loans to finance its economy.

In an incredibly short time, less than 10 years, from 1913 to 1923, Germany plunged from being a rich nation, to being totally impoverished, due to its defeat in World War I and the resulting hyperinflation. Also in an incredibly short time, the U.S.A. has turned from the world's largest creditor to the largest foreign debtor in the world. At the time of the great economic crash in the late 1920s, Germany had borrowed about half of all the world's capital exports in 1928, most of it on short term. After the October 29, 1929 Wall Street meltdown, Americans withdrew their money and Germany saw its economy collapse, creating an international calamity. During the worst period of the Depression 27 per cent of the U.S. labor force was unemployed and as much as 44 per cent of German workers. Today, if Germany and Japan were to withdraw their trillions of dollars now loaned to the U.S.A., its economy, too, would collapse.

TODAY WE SEE AN uncanny resemblance to the conditions of the late 1920s. Then, with wages lagging, profits rose disproportionately and the rich got richer. Now, with wages lagging, profits have risen sharply, making the rich richer. Then, as demand could not keep pace with the rapidly increasing productivity in the heyday of Henry Ford, the result was over-production and speculation, resulting in global industrial disintegration. This was all the more drastic in the U.S.A. because lagging increase in demand had been boosted by an enormous expansion of consumer credit. Today, too, debt — consumer and corporate — is at an all-time peak.

Germany's distress, especially its joblessness, gave rise to Adolf Hitler and his fascist regime,

which, in turn, caused World War II and the death of more than 50 million people. Today we have a different war: the world, and in particular its dominant player, the U.S.A., against the environment.

THE SKIRMISHING HAS been going on for some time, witness ozone depletion, acid rain and the onset of global warming, but with President Bush's New Energy Plan, the die has been cast. This is war, and, unlike the Cold War, the Warming War cannot be won. World War I was concluded in World War II, which saw the Holocaust, and immense human suffering worldwide. What the Warming War will bring, we can only guess, but war never is good news.

I sometimes wonder whether I see things too starkly, too focused, too one-sidedly. After all, we live in peaceful times. We have greater prosperity, more goods, more choice, more freedom than any other generation before us. So, is not this the best of times? Should I not laud Bush's initiative in perceiving obstacles to the good life and doing something about it? Am I unfair in my criticisms of the powers that be?

Perhaps I am too much of a Dutchman to appreciate all these luxuries, having experienced five years of German occupation, even though I, too, am its beneficiary. I too benefit from and use the modern conveniences. But that is not the point. The point is that we blatantly waste resources. I have a graph in front of me depicting the energy consumption per person in 1998. In the U.S. it is a little over eight tons of oil equivalent. In Canada a little under eight tons. Germany and Japan each use about four tons. In the U.K. about 3.6 tons. So no wonder that Jan Pronk, the Dutch Minister of the Environment and the head of the UN forum on Climate Change, calls the Bush Plan a man-made disaster. The Europeans have reason to be critical of us in North America, using less than half the amount of polluting energy we do, with better results. Many of us have been in Europe and know that the quality of life there is higher than here.

JAN PRONK IS NOT THE only critic. The UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, has directly challenged President Bush's climate policy. In a speech at Tufts University on May 19, Annan said that action to limit climate change was the only way to ensure economic growth, a statement exactly opposite of the U.S.A. view. He said that conserving energy and using it

more efficiently was more than a matter of personal choice, as Bush maintains, and insisted that the science of climate change, despite the criticisms of the skeptics, was well founded. He pointed out that the U.S.A. is the world's leading emitter of greenhouse gases, so it is important for it to join others in reducing emissions.

Annan also made it clear that he does not share the president's reservations about the validity of global warming. "Imagine melting polar ice caps and rising sea levels, threatening beloved and highly developed coastal areas such as Cape Cod with erosion and storm surges. Imagine a warmer and wetter world in which infectious diseases such as malaria and yellow fever spread more easily. This is tomorrow's forecast."

Meanwhile, environmentalists from the Pacific Islands, whose countries could someday be lost to rising sea levels, have only harsh words for Bush's energy plan. Fiji's environment-conscious Patrina Dumar said, "We are all environmental criminals. But there must be a new category for the United States. I would like to see an international justice system that would recognize this crime."

SO I AM NOT ALONE. Also within the U.S.A. there is a lot of criticism. The eminent economist, Paul Krugman, writes: "To justify the lust for refineries, pipelines, nuclear power plants, Mr Cheney has gone to great length to fabricate an energy crisis. 'Estimates,' says the report, 'indicate that over the next 20 years U.S. oil consumption will increase by 33 per cent.' Whose estimates? In the 20 years prior to 1999, oil consumption rose less than five per cent. All I can figure is that Mr Cheney's people are extrapolating from the abrupt decline in automobile fuel efficiency over the last few years as people have switched from ordinary cars to SUVs. And what they are saying is that we should base our energy policy on the assumption that this quite recent trend will continue unabated

for decades.

"Apparently the Bush-Cheney report assumes that everyone who still drives a mere car would have to acquire an SUV and everyone who now drives an SUV would have to start something the size of a Sherman tank."

What is behind these false assumptions? Cheney wants to scare the U.S. people into relaxing environmental regulations and introduce a vast array of subsidies for energy producers. Remember: the oil industry paid him \$33 million U.S. last year. Pay back time for the Vice President!

SO THE RESULT WILL be? A few sentences of what Maureen Dowd writes in the *New York Times* will give you an idea: "We'll bake the earth. We'll brown it and serve it, simmer it, sear it, grill it. If rising seas obliterate the coasts, our marine geologists will sculpt new ones. If we get charred by the sun our dermatologists will replace our skin. If the globe gets warmer, we'll turn up the air-conditioning. We will let our power plants spew any chemicals we deem necessary to fire up our fancy power tools. We will drill for oil whenever and wherever we please. We don't care about caribou. Give us our 69 degrees, winter and summer. Let there be light — no timers, no freaky-shaped long-life bulbs. We will perfect the dream of nuclear power. We will put our toxic waste wherever we want, whenever we want. We will have the biggest, baddest missiles, and we will point them in any direction we like, across the galaxies, through eternity, forever and ever. We will modify food in any way we want and send it to any country we see fit at prices that we and we alone determine. Our international banking arm — the World Bank and the IMF will support whatever dictatorship suits us best. We are America." End of quote.

Bert Hielema sends this from St. Paul, Minn.

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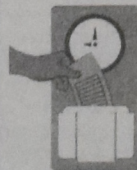
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Classified Rates	Wedding	Anniversaries	
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	Anniversaries  <i>Congratulations to Jacob & Maria Kuntz on their 50th wedding anniversary.</i>		<i>Congratulations to B.H. (Henk) & Rena Hoornenborg on their 40th wedding anniversary.</i>
Thank You Thank you to all those who came to our Open House and celebrated with us our 60th wedding anniversary. You made it a special day. Above all, we thank our Heavenly Father for blessing us with good health to enjoy all these years together. James & Wilma Lycklama Burlington, Ont.	Hoofddorp Brampton the Neth. Ont. 1951 June 29 2001 "Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Ps. 23:6) JACOB and MARIA KUNTZ (nee BIESHEUVEL) Fifty years ago the Lord brought together our mom and dad (Oma and Opa) in marriage and they began their time in the ministry. During those 50 years they served the Lord with gladness in Friesland, Drenthe, Ontario and British Columbia. As their children and grandchildren, we offer our love and warmest congratulations: Mathilda † — already home Evelyn & Syd Hielema — Sioux Center, Iowa Joya, Justin, Adrian Don — Toronto There will be an opportunity to congratulate them at an Open House on Saturday, June 30, 2001 from 2 - 4:30 p.m. in the King Tower of Holland Christian Homes, Brampton, Ont. Best wishes may be sent to them at 35 Kingknoll Dr., King Tower #1502, Brampton, ON L6Y 5G5	Deventer, Ov. Chatham the Neth. Ontario RIEMKE B. DEVRIES FLIKWEERT and PIETER C. FLIKWEERT Married June 27, 1951 Our parents have been married for fifty years. Naturally, much can be said about their lives, individually and together. But these things stand out: They have a rich love for each other and an unconditional love for their six children, their children's spouses and their twenty-four grandchildren. Above all, they have a deep love for God. Their lives, exemplifying God's great love, continue to have a profound influence on all of us. Dad and Mom, we are so very thankful for you, and we praise God for these years He has given you to each other and to us. We pray that God may continue to bless you with good health, and that He may give you many more wonderful years together. Lots of love, Your children and grandchildren. Home address: 40 Elm St., Apt. 222, Chatham, ON N7M 6A5	Marum, Gr. Brampton the Neth. Ont. 1941 May 29 2001 With gratitude to the Lord, who has kept them in His care, we are pleased to announce the 60th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents WILLIAM and ASKE BRAAM (nee HAAN) May God bless and keep you in the years ahead. We love you Dad & Mom, Grandpa & Grandma. You are a blessing to us! (Hilda deceased 1996), Jim & Jane vanderVoort — Orillia, Ont. Margaret & Steve Klingenberg, James & Christine vanderVoort, Angela & Siebren Boersma, Hayley vanderVoort Harold & Grace Braam — Mannheim, Ont. Doug & Suzanne Braam, Ken Braam, Sheila Braam Dick & Betsy Braam — Georgetown, Ont. Jason & Retisny Braam, Sarah & Joshua deBoer, Ryan & Hannah Braam Mary & Gerry Bontius — Woodbridge, Ont. Ken Bontius, Kevin Bontius, Steve & Janice Bontius, Suzanne & Robert Takacs, Mark Bontius and 15 great-grandchildren. Home address: Holland Christian Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S. HT 509, Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7
Travel DCA Travel & Cruise 1-800-667-2525 TORONTO 416-224-5211 BRADFORD 905-775-6763 E-mail: dca-travel@telus.ca Emergency Service Available Visit us at: www.dca-travel.com ON SALE: KLM, A. C., Canada 3000 MARTINAIR, DIRECT Ont. Reg. 01495998	To advertise in <i>Christian Courier</i>, call our toll-free number: 1-800-969-4838.	Nanny, the Netherlands Nanny needed for a family (with four children ages 9-14) in the Netherlands. Employment to begin in August. For more information, please call: Anny Blijdorp 011-31-596-533343, e-mail: blijdorp@wish.net or Margaret Vander Veen 905-389-5257	Obituary Suddenly, at home, on May 8, 2001 the Lord called to himself VICKY (ALICE) HOBE (nee ARENDS) age 66. Beloved wife of John for 43 years. Loving mother of Marc (Dian), Rick (Dana), and Robin (Kirk). Cherished Oma of 14 grandchildren. Also survived by her mother Klazina Arends, two sisters, Janine (Gerald) Lock, Lee (Harry) Downey, two brothers, Peter (Joy), and Hank (Femy). Funeral service was held at Palm Lane Chr. Ref. Church, Scottsdale, Ariz. Correspondence address: John Hobe, 624 S. Eldorado Rd., Mesa, Ariz. 85202 Church News Christian Reformed Church NOBLEFORD, Alta. The committee for the restoration of the first Christian Reformed Church in Canada (est. 1905) is pleased to announce that restoration is now complete. Many thanks to all who supported us in this venture. You are invited to attend the official opening of the church on June 30, 2001 at 4 p.m. Refreshments and fellowship to follow. RV parking available on site. RSVP to Bert Konynenbelt, Box 82, Nobleford, AB T0L 1S0 or phone 403-824-3442 by June 15, 2001. Nobleford CRC Restoration Committee

Classifieds

Obituaries

Veendijk, Dr. Grimsby, Ont.
the Neth. Canada
June 21, 1910 - May 4, 2001
On Friday, May 4, the Lord took home to glory, our dear husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather
PETER MATTER
Beloved husband of Alice.
Loving father of:
Faye & Mike Tjoelker — Guelph
Richard & Jennifer Matter — Woodstock
Rose & Andrew Vanderlaan — Fergus
Luke & Hennie Matter — Burlington
Bert & Teeny Matter — Guelph
Loving grandfather of 21, great-grandfather of 10.
Funeral Service was held in Guelph, First Christian Reformed Church, on May 8, 2001, Pastors J.J. Hoytema and Jack Vandeheof officiating.
Correspondence address:
81 Dean Ave., Guelph, ON N1G 1L3

Peacefully, on May 17, 2001
BAENTJE (BETTY) TRAVAILLE
(nee POSTMA)
passed away in her 87th year.
Beloved wife of Teye Travaille of Brampton, Ont. Loving mother of:
Eda & Jerry Klompmaker
Bonnie Teeuwissen
Grace & Harry Braam
Tina Gordon
Coby & John Lees
Fondly remembered by her 15 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.
Predeceased by son Bote Travaille, granddaughter Laurie Teeuwissen and son-in-law Robert Gordon.
Funeral service was held in the Christian Reformed Church, Orangeville, Ont. on May 22, 2001.
If desired, memorial donations may be made to Orangeville Christian School, RR 5, Orangeville ON L9W 2Z2 or charity of choice.

Hollumerzwaag, Fr. Smithers, B.C.
the Neth. Canada
October 14, 1924 - May 2, 2001
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine." (Isaiah 43:1b)

HARKE VANDERMEULEN
was taken to glory after a brief illness.
Loving husband of Sophie Vandermeulen-Beerda.
Lovingly remembered and missed by brothers and sisters-in-law and many nieces and nephews.
Griet Beerda — the Netherlands
Corrie & Martin VanderKruyk — Duncan, B.C.
Bill & Rena Brandsma — Smithers, B.C.
Gerrit & Gaats Beerda — the Netherlands
Ann Beerda-Bronsema — Maple Ridge, B.C.
Sietze & Tolly Beerda — the Netherlands
Shirley Reitsma-Beerda — Smithers, B.C.
Griet Beerda-de Bruin — the Netherlands
Mike & Jenny Bandstra — Lindsay, Ont.
Predeceased by sisters-in-law Gerdie Brandsma and Kooje Beerda, brothers-in-law Sid Beerda, Andy Beerda, Carl Beerda, Theo Beerda and Jack Reitsma.
It is our prayer that our Lord will be very near to Sophie and her family in the times ahead.

On Friday, March 30, 2001, at Faith Manor, Holland Christian Homes, Brampton, Ont.
MARIA (DYKXHOORN) VAN DORP
passed away peacefully in the Lord, in her 97th year.
Beloved wife of the late Gerrit Van Dorp.
Loved mother of
Theresa (Mrs. Case Van Hemert) — P.E.I.
Henny (Mrs. Hank Schaly) — Calabogie, Ont.
Riet (Mrs. Hubert Huyer) — Burnstown, Ont.
Gary & Marie Van Dorp — Vanastra, Ont.
Ron & Jane Van Dorp — Egbert, Ont.
Jack & Kathryn Van Dorp — Egbert, Ont.
Ann (Mrs. Bruce Duncan) — Wellandport, Ont.
Dr. John & Gena Van Dorp — Wiarion, Ont.
Lovingly remembered by her 39 grandchildren and 46 great-grandchildren and one great-great-granddaughter.
Survived by 2 sisters in the Netherlands.
Funeral Service was held at the Christian Reformed Church, Alliston, Ont., on April 2, 2001.
Interment at Alliston Union Cemetery.

Personal

Christian gentleman in early 30s, who enjoys church, music, sports and family, would like to meet a Christian lady at similar age. Please send letters to File #2720, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

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ON L0S 1C0
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Personal

Sincere Christian gentleman in his 50s wants to meet a Christian lady who enjoys music and church activities. Please send letters to: File #2719, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.

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Christian social action is more than
just a good idea

Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) is a growing alternative trade union based on Christian principles and currently represents over 25,000 members. With offices located in Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario, and active expansion plans for Manitoba (2002) and the Atlantic provinces, CLAC has an ongoing need for front-line trade union representatives. Applications are currently being received for:

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The responsibilities of this position cover the entire range of labour relations work. This includes organizing workers into bargaining units; negotiating collective agreements on behalf of members; working with members and employers to resolve grievances and encourage partnership in the workplace; and representing CLAC in various settings as called upon.

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Att. Mr. John Van Pelt, Principal
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N7M 6L8

Phone: 519-352-4980;

Fax: 519-352-4041

E-mail:

johnvanpelt@chathamchristian.ca

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Att. Mrs. A. Kapinga-Gruning
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M5W 2J5

Phone: 416-741-5770;

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Job Opportunities

DIACONAL MINISTRIES CANADA

This is a new national ministry initiative by the deacons of the Christian Reformed Churches across Canada. Diaconal Ministries Canada (DMC) will equip deacons to carry out a ministry of compassion, empower the poor and equip church members to work as partners. Diaconal Ministries invites applications for the position of

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We require a mature Christian leader with strong relational skills, who is a self-starter and has a passion for the poor. The person should have demonstrated gifts in casting vision and adult education, strong administrative and organizational abilities, good verbal and written communications skills, and is a team player. Computer literacy is essential. The position will work out of the denominational office in Burlington.

Send resumes by **June 30, 2001** to: Simon Oosterhof,

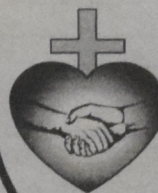
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Research shows health benefits from tomatoes

(NC)—A recent report in *Allergy* reported that Israeli researchers found lycopene, a natural antioxidant found in many ripe fruits including tomatoes, seems to reduce the risk of exercise-induced asthma in some patients.

Dr. A. Ben-Amotz of the National Institute of Oceanography, Haifa, and colleagues note that there is some evidence that dietary antioxidants protect against exercise-induced asthma. To determine whether lycopene might be helpful in this regard, the researchers conducted a study of 20 patients with exercise-induced asthma. The patients were randomly assigned to once-daily treatment with an inactive placebo or lycopene from tomatoes.

After a week of such treatment, patients given the placebo showed a drop in lung function of at least 15% after exercise challenge. Of those given lycopene, 55% showed significant protection against exercise-induced asthma.

- News Canada

INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN STUDIES

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

The Institute for Christian Studies is seeking a Director of Operations. This person will be committed to the aims and purposes of the organization, will be a good fiscal manager, and an excellent personnel manager. The right candidate must be proficient in a computerized environment and be a good team player.

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For additional information about the Institute for Christian Studies please see our website at www.icscanada.edu. ICS is an affiliate member of the Toronto School of Theology at the University of Toronto.

Apply with resume by mail, fax or email to Harry Fernhout, President, 229 College Street, Toronto, ON M5T 1R4, fax 416-979-2332, or email moulton@icscanada.edu.

We thank all candidates in advance for their application. Only those selected for an interview will be contacted. Deadline for application June 20, 2001.



Canada Invests In Clean Air

(NC)—OTTAWA — The Government of Canada is investing \$120.2 million in new measures to accelerate action to improve air quality.

Environment Minister David Anderson announced the action plan earlier this year, saying that it focuses on a "10-year regulatory road map" for cleaner vehicles and fuels, initial measures to reduce smog causing emissions from industrial sectors, improvements to the cross country network of pollutant monitoring stations and expansion of the public reporting by industry on pollutant releases. It ensures Canada will meet its commitments to implement the Canada-U.S. Ozone Annex signed in December 2000.

The Ozone Annex commits both countries to reduce dramatically the smog-causing pollutants (nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds) that cause ground-level ozone to form. It also contains

commitments on monitoring and reporting measures.

The \$120.2 million investment in cleaner air builds on earlier initiatives including regulations to reduce sulphur levels in gasoline, measures to enhance science and monitoring programs on acid rain and leading in the development of a United Nations treaty to reduce Persistent Organic Pollutants such as PCBs, dioxins and furans.

Mr. Anderson said: "We know that air pollution affects our health, and that children, senior citizens and those with respiratory and cardiac illness are particularly vulnerable to the health effects of dirty air. Therefore our job is not finished. We will continue to work on reducing emissions from industrial sectors, on engaging more and more Canadians and on strengthening the foundation of clean air science."

For more information, visit <http://www.ec.gc.ca/air>

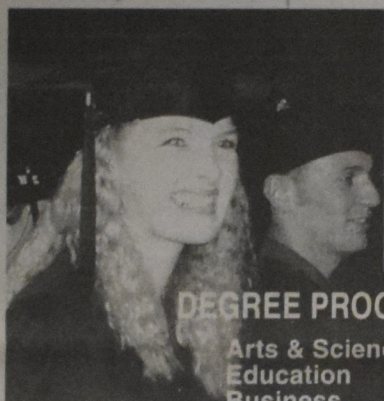
- News Canada

Classifieds

Miscellaneous

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Home Improvement Quick Tip: Maximum security gadgets

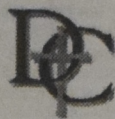
(NC)—Strong perimeter security is designed to discourage intruders before they even begin. Here are a few of the most current ideas offered by Schlage Canada, specialists in locks and home security since 1909:

- Deadbolts: Install Maximum Security Deadbolts on all exterior doors. A decorative variety can be viewed at www.schlagelock.com.
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- Indoor Light Timers: Your home will look occupied when you are away.
- Security Cameras: Link a camera to your VCR or directly to a security company.

- News Canada

Job Opportunity

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Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College
498 4th Avenue NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697

Facsimile: 712 722-4496
E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu
Website: www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaff

Dordt College encourages the nominations and candidacies of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.

Miscellaneous

Christian seniors project prepares for ground breaking

Grimsby - Future residents of Shalom Evergreen Terrace and the public are invited to watch local dignitaries and board members officially begin construction of this new Life lease community, designed exclusively for area seniors. The ceremonial sod turning is set to take place Monday June 18th on site at the north east corner of Bartlett Avenue and Main Street in Grimsby.

"This is an exciting day for Shalom Evergreen Terrace because it marks the beginning of a new era in providing seniors with private independent living," says John Bergshoeff, Chairman of the Shalom Evergreen Terrace Board. "This development fills a void in housing options currently available. We are creating a unique community of shared values and interests." The occupancy of this project is expected to be summer 2002.

Residents will have the right to occupy a unit and enjoy the common facilities for their lifetime. This right passes to the estate and can be sold at market value at anytime.

Support services will be incorporated into the project to allow seniors to age-in-place in comfort and dignity. With 65% of suites sold, Evergreen Terrace has evidently filled a gap in the local market.

To learn more about this exciting project, plan to attend the ground breaking June 18th at 2 p.m. at Mountainview CRC, 290 Main St. E. in Grimsby. Call Mel Elzinga at (905) 309-7888 for more information.



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Church Anniversaries

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E-mail: firstcrrc@gatewest.net
Phone: 204-727-4652 or 204-725-1445

50TH ANNIVERSARY

Wyoming Christian Reformed Church, 50th anniversary celebration, Wyoming Ontario.

All former members and friends of the congregation are invited to a weekend of celebration on July 14 and 15, 2001. Join us for dinner at 5:30 p.m. and a program at 8 p.m. on Saturday and commemorative services on Sunday at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Please RSVP by June 12 if you plan to attend the dinner. Limited seating available.

For more information and/or to make reservations call Obbie Deelstra at 519-845-3877 or e-mail Emily Dam: emily@ebtech.net

25th ANNIVERSARY

The Mount Brydges Christian Reformed Church will be celebrating its 25th anniversary on June 16 and 17. A dessert social is planned for Saturday evening at 7:00 p.m. at the Strathroy Community Christian School, 7870 Walkers Drive, Strathroy. A special worship service will be held on Sunday at 9:30 a.m. with former pastors participating. All former members and friends are invited. For more information, please call 519-264-2362.

Ancaster Christian Reformed Church in Ancaster, Ontario

All former pastors and members are invited to help us celebrate the 25th anniversary on June 23 and 24, 2001. Join us for a church picnic and program on Saturday and celebrating services on Sunday. For more information call the church at 905-648-2323 or e-mail at acrc@icom.ca.

50th ANNIVERSARY

Exeter Christian Reformed Church, Ontario, will be celebrating its 50th anniversary on September 22 and 23, 2001. Join us Saturday for brunch, Open House, barbeque and evening program or Sunday for our special services. For dinner reservations or more details, call Jennifer Branderhorst 519-235-2990 or e-mail: bulletin@exetercrrc.on.ca

First Christian Reformed Church of Chatham, Ont. is the oldest Christian Reformed Church in Ontario. With thanksgiving to God, we will be celebrating our 75th anniversary on the weekend of June 23-24, 2001. Festivities include a Saturday potluck supper and a service of thanksgiving on Sunday, June 24, at 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul's Congregational Church on Park Ave. West. For more information, please contact Case and Jessie Timmerman at 519-354-2859.

Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

- June 9 Christian Singles Social, Burlington, Ont., 8 p.m. Anglican Church 662 Guelph Line. 905-388-7387.
- June 11 Wellandport Chr. School, Retirement E. Heida, J. Pouli, 7 p.m. School Gym. See ad in this issue.
- June 13 Hollandse Dag, Kingston, Ont. First Chr. Ref. Church, 10 a.m. Speaker Rev. R. Praamsma, Topic: *De wederkomst van Christus*. For info call 613-546-5615 or 613-542-7928
- June 13 Hollandse Dag, Moorefield, Ont. 10 a.m., Speaker Rev. Jacob Kuntz. For info. call 519-638-2053
- June 16 Grunnege Picnic, Grand River Conservation Authority Park, Rockwood, Ont. Anytime after 10 a.m. (Authority charges entrance fee to park) but picnic, admission free event. For info. call 519-235-0719
- June 16 Open House for Tena Van Schepen, John Knox Chr. School Brampton, Ont. 2-4 p.m.
- June 16-17 25th anniversary Mount Brydges CRC, Mt. Brydges, Ont. See ad in this issue. Call 519-264-2362
- June 20 Organ recital by Jonathan Oldengarm at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, Young St., one block north of St. Clair, Toronto, 12:00 p.m. Call 519-338-3214
- June 23-24 Ancaster CRC, Ancaster, Ont. Celebration picnic Saturday, services on Sunday. Call 905-648-2323
- June 23-24 Chatham CRC, 75th Anniversary Saturday Potluck; Sunday Thanksgiving Service 6:30 p.m. See ad.
- June 27 50th Anniversary Voortman Cookies Ltd. Former salespersons & employees are invited to Open House.
- Plant tours 9 a.m. See ad in this issue. Call 905-335-9500
- June 30 Nobleford CRC Restored oldest CRC in Canada, opening 4 p.m. Call 403-824-3442. See ad this issue.
- July 2 Frisian Picnic, 11 a.m. Pinehurst Conservation Park, Paris, Ont. Info. 519-587-2162. See ad this issue.
- July 7 Wieringermeer Picnic. Queens Park, Stratford 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Call 519-631-6234 or 519-537-7549.
- July 7-8 50th anniversary Wallaceburg CRC, Wallaceburg, Ont. Saturday 4 p.m. social. Sunday 10 p.m. Praise service. For info. call 519-892-3569 or e-mail: jwdykema@kent.net See ad in May 14 issue.
- July 8 Dutch Service, Ancaster CRC, 70 Garner Rd E (Hwy 53) Ancaster, Ont. 3 p.m. Rev. Jacob Kuntz
- Sept. 14-16 First CRC Brandon, Man., 50th anniversary. Call 204-727-4652 or 204-725-1445. See ad in this issue.
- Sept. 22-23 Exeter Chr. Reformed Church, Exeter, Ont. 50th anniversary. For info. call 519-235-2990

Wellandport Christian School

invites all friends, former colleagues, and students to a Retirement Evening

for Evelyn Heida & John Pouli on

Monday, June 11 at 7:00 p.m. in the

Wellandport Christian School Gym



FRISIAN PICNIC

Monday, July 2, 2001
Starting at 11 a.m.

Pinehurst Conservation Park

Paris, Ontario

(on Highway 24A, 5 miles north of Paris)

For more information call

Bev Slofstra @ 519-587-2162

NOTICE

The Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, in responding to allegations of sexual abuse at an overseas missionary boarding school during the 1970s has appointed a committee to investigate the matter and to make appropriate recommendations to the Board of Trustees. Anyone with information about such alleged abuse is requested to contact any member of the committee. The identity of persons contacting the committee will be treated with discretion and confidentiality. No public disclosure of any kind will happen without the specific consent of the individuals involved.

The membership of the committee is:

Dr. Arthur Schoonveld
616-224-5882
schoonva@crcna.org

Ms Kathleen Smith
616-956-7421
kathy_smith@firstcrrc.org

Dr. Carol Rottman
616-691-7672
rottcc@iserv.net

Ms. Sarah Cook
613-745-5914
scook@ocri.ca

Rev. Peter Nicolai
519-354-3807
pnicolai@ciaccess.com

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News

WCC head calls churches to reassess aim of mission work

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (Newsroom) — Sectarian violence in some parts of the world should cause Christians to rethink their assumptions about the mission of the church, according to Konrad Raiser, the secretary general of the World Council of Churches.

He suggested that clashes between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia and Nigeria were examples of situations that call for a reassessment of the primary aim of missionary work, the United Methodist News Service (UMNS) reported. Raiser said the WCC does not intend to call into question the commitment to evangelism, but asked, in light of such strife, "What would it mean to rearticulate that missionary calling as a message of peace and reconciliation?"

Radical rethinking

Raiser said he realized that "this requires a fairly radical rethinking of assumptions about mission, which needs to be approached with great sensitivity, great understanding and great humility."

Raiser spoke in Nashville, Tennessee, on April 23 at the first U.S. event related to the WCC's Decade to Overcome Violence.

Raiser's remarks come on the eve of the World Evangelical Fellowship's 11th general assembly, which will include a presentation and discussion of "The Nature of the Church." More than 800 evangelical Protestant leaders



Worship at the Berlin launch of the Decade to Overcome Violence.

from around the globe met in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, May 4-10. The umbrella body, which emphasizes the church's call to evangelism, says it represents some 160 million Christians worldwide.

Peace and reconciliation

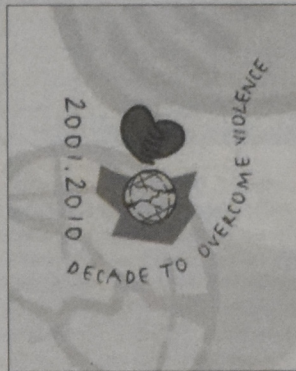
Raiser said he discussed this view with clergy in visits to Indonesia and Nigeria last year. "In both countries I have tried to begin

reflection with them on the question of whether we could not and should not understand the focus of our mission in terms of the ministry of reconciliation — that, in fact, the content of our missionary presence should be to bring the message of peace and reconciliation," he said.

Raiser noted political factors in Indonesia and Nigeria that have led to sectarian strife but also cited evangelism efforts in other parts of the world that have raised tensions. In Sri Lanka, centuries of harmony between Christians and Buddhists has begun to erode because of the entry of new groups with the main goal of converting Buddhists, he said. In response, Christian houses of worship

have been attacked or destroyed. Since the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, an influx of missionaries has also caused conflict with established churches.

In his 1997 book, *To Be the Church*, Raiser stated that the "stories told are very similar from Russia to the Pacific, from Egypt to South Africa: the churches are disturbed by a massive influx of either Christian charismatic or fundamentalist groups and by the



The logo for WCC's Decade to Overcome Violence.

aggressive methods of recruitment they use. Appealing to the principles of religious liberty, these groups engage in what the local churches consider to be proselytism, especially among young people still in the formative stage of their identity. Some of the Christian groups coming in are virtually anti-ecumenical. This creates embarrassment and confusion among WCC member churches who feel at a loss to correct the distorted image of ecumenism."

Raiser's second five-year term as general secretary expires in 2002. From 1983 to 1993 he was professor of systematic theology and ecumenism at the University of the Ruhr in Bochum, Germany.

Justice co-ordinator position new for CRC

Alan Doerksen

BURLINGTON, Ont. — The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) has become increasingly involved in justice work, and this is reflected in the creation of a new position — that of Justice Co-ordinator.

"Overall, there is a general increase in our involvement in justice work," says Wayne deJong, Canadian Director of the Christian

Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC). "CRWRC for sure has been expanding justice work.... It underlies so much of our work.... We're trying to get to the root causes of poverty and hunger."

The new position will be based at the Burlington CRC office and will involve working with many aspects of justice. Some key responsibilities will be "educating our constituency about justice is-

suues and trying to engage them in advocacy work," explains deJong. The CRC is building a social justice network in Canadian Christian Reformed churches, and "30 per cent of the [new] job is related to this network," he says. The network is dealing with "issues related to domestic poverty as well as international poverty, aboriginal rights, racism, gender discrimination, politics at the national level," says deJong.

Bioethics, poverty

The new justice co-ordinator will also deal with issues the Committee for Contact with the Government (CCG) has been working on, such as bioethics, poverty and economic justice. The job will connect with the diaconate and the CRC's office for Social Justice and Hunger Action.

deJong explains that 30 per cent of the new job will be related to the social justice work of CRWRC, and will involve communication between the Burlington office and overseas

CRWRC workers, as well as writing and providing information to the CRC constituency about CRWRC's work. deJong will delegate some of his work to the new employee, including involvement with the Inter-Church Coalition on Africa.

Twenty per cent of the new job involves connections with ecumenical justice coalitions, such as the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's Social Action Commission and Canadian Churches for Justice and Peace (a coalition which combines 10 Christian agencies which have focused on justice issues in Canada and globally). "All of this has been kind of unco-ordinated lately," notes deJong.

Anti-racism training will comprise about 10 per cent of the new job, in co-operation with the CRC's race relations offices. Aboriginal concerns will be another focus, also comprising 10 per cent.

The new justice co-ordinator will probably start his or her job in early July, suggested deJong.

Construction begins on senior housing development in Niagara peninsula

GRIMSBY, Ont. — The ceremonial sod turning for Shalom Evergreen Terrace in Grimsby, Ontario is scheduled for June 18, 2:00 p.m. It is the fruition of several years of planning by a non-profit organization that saw the need for additional housing for seniors in the Golden Horseshoe. It

consists of life-lease housing, which means that seniors will own their own condos and may sell it at market value any time.

The 98 suites are expected to be ready for occupancy in the summer of 2002. About 65 per cent of the units have been spoken for.

News Digest

Faith-based beauty

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (Religion Today) — Walk into a store in Santa Monica, Calif., and you'll find a saleswoman extolling the virtues of botanical face creams and moisturizers. "It is not just the ingredients that make them so appealing," she said. "They pray over the herbs."

"Does using it mean you don't have to go to church on Sunday?" asked one customer.

Welcome to Los Angeles, where the quest for beauty now involves the invocation of a higher order.

Susan West Kurz, president of Dr. Hauschka Skin Care U.S.A., says, "Most women are looking for a higher meaning, and one of the vehicles is health." Still, she noted, Californians are fickle consumers, and faith-based beauty could prove short-lived. So it worries her that the novelty of prayer, not health, seems to be what resonates with her customers.

Wawa misses its moose

WAWA, Ont. (CP) — Henrietta the Moose is gone, and this northern Ontario town wants her back. The stuffed moose from Young's General Store was confiscated by Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources recently, and the province says the popular creature won't be return because it is part of a court case.

But angry Wawa residents have launched a campaign to have Henrietta returned.

"Henrietta belongs to Wawa," says Reeve Doug Woods. "The next thing that might be seized is the goose at the Tourist Information Centre."

Moose owner Anita Young says she leased Henrietta from a man in Sault Ste. Marie. Two conservation officers from the Sault told her they had a warrant and that the moose had to be seized as evidence. Details of the court case were not immediately available.

Mrs. Pig changes name

ROME — Eventually, it was all too much for Mrs. Pig. At the tender age of 73, Lina Maiale has decided to change her name to Lina Meri, to escape the giggles of acquaintances whenever she introduces herself. "Maiale" means pig in Italian, reports Reuters.

For awhile, she used her husband's name, but wives usually keep their surnames in Italy.